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JUNE 1920.

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## *THE FOURTH DIMENSION.*

BY HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### MR. YEO TAKES THE FIELD.

I.

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Cherry sat down, glancing at an immense pile of plays, probably unread. Then he said briskly:

'What do you think of Miss Oldacre?'

'I haven't time to tell you,' replied Orford. 'Miss Oldacre is a long and delightful chapter in the History of the British Drama.'

'She is playing in my comedy at Manchester.'

Orford ought to have known this, but he didn't. He expressed mild surprise:

'Really? I congratulate you.'

Quickly and concisely, Cherry explained why he had asked for this second interview. He had spent an evening studying the actress who was going out of the cast at Mr. Orford's theatre. The sooner she went the better in the interests of all concerned.

'That is my opinion, Mr. Cherrington.'

'The young lady playing in my comedy is all that the other is not. I am convinced that she will more than satisfy you.'

'But you must allow me to be the judge of that.'

Cherrington played his ace of trumps.

'I hate the idea of losing Miss Jessica Yeo. That is her name. I feel towards her as Columbus felt when he discovered America. She is immense. Miss Oldacre thinks so. Sir Felix Crewe shared that opinion.'

'Their opinion impresses and interests me.'

'If Miss Oldacre coached her for this part, and if Miss Oldacre guaranteed to you that she could play it adequately, would you waive this stipulation about rehearsing on approval?'

'Will you smoke a cigar, Mr. Cherrington?'

'With pleasure.'

The selection and lighting of a cigar took time. When the cigar was drawing nicely, Mr. Orford delivered his ultimatum:

'If Miss Oldacre is kind enough to coach Miss Yeo, and if she gives me her positive assurance that the part will be adequately played, I will engage Miss Yeo. No manager in London can shrink more than I do from this rehearsing on approval. To tell a pretty, enthusiastic girl that she is not good enough for this theatre is simply heart-rending.'

'Do you tell her, Mr. Orford?'

'Never—if I can avoid it.'

Orford laughed, leaning back in his comfortable chair, eyeing Cherry with a twinkle in his eye, thinking to himself: 'This is a sharp young fellow, who doesn't entirely consider his own interests.' He continued seriously: 'This theatre, with its traditions, is a great responsibility; and I am no longer young. I guard our traditions jealously.'

Cherrington nodded. He regarded Orford as one of the Old Guard, but by no means negligible on that account. It was said of him, by the more cynical spirits at The Buskin, that he concerned himself with nothing outside his famous theatre. This might be true or not. Certainly results justified Orford's undivided attention to his own affairs. He inspired devotion, as Crewe had done, in those who worked for and under him. And his position was almost unassailable. The best came to him, as he had said. Before the war he could fill his stalls with his own pet public. Burke's Landed Gentry accepted gratefully the comedies that Mr. Orford presented.

Young daughters could take their mothers to these comedies knowing nothing whatever about them except the salient fact that no line would offend or infect the maternal mind. Problem plays, risky adaptations from Palais Royal farces, melodrama, were taboo.

'What is this Manchester comedy about, Mr. Cherrington? You may think I ought to know. I don't. Look!'

He indicated the pile of plays on a table.

'Surely you have a reader, Mr. Orford?'

'I trust no judgment except my own. I have a "nose" for what is wanted here. I am aware, of course, that you have had a success.'

Thus encouraged, Cherry presented a synopsis of his play. Orford lay back in his chair, half closing his eyes, pursing his lips, nodding his head like a mandarin. When the young man finished, he said kindly:

'A well-spiced dish to set before Manchester. I shall be entirely frank with you.'

'Please.'

'Coster plays are not to my taste. I seek distinction, quality, polish. Naturally, one doesn't find that in the Mile End Road. A good, clean story—humorously told. That—is the *desideratum*. But let me see your script.'

Cherry went his way enjoying the great man's excellent cigar, and assimilating his words of wisdom. A good, clean story, humorously told. That description might apply fairly to the play upon which he was working, the play built for and around Jess. If Jess captured Orford, he would read a play that exploited her with interest sharply whetted.

He told himself that he liked Orford, because he appeared to be straight. And a gentleman of taste. Good taste, as Mrs. Grundy interprets that elusive expression, was the dominant note of Orford's theatre. It struck Cherrington, however, that Orford had paid in full the bill of penalties which success in the theatrical world imposes ruthlessly. He sat aloof from everything and everybody outside his theatre. What a singular obsession the stage was! It obsessed all from the presenter of plays, who paid the piper, down to the call-boy. The counterfeit presentment of life became a greater thing than life itself. Orford was a bachelor. He lived in his comfortable room at the theatre. He might have subsidiary interests—he had spoken of his garden in the country—but they were regarded as subsidiary. He was rich; he could retire; but he couldn't and wouldn't retire.

'Am I like that?' asked Cherrington.

He tried to answer the question honestly, recognising a dual personality in himself, two Cherringtons at civil war with each other. One was head over heels in love with a young woman; the other was in love with his profession. Till he met Jess, his profession had ranked first. It might rank first again. He thought, not too happily, of his relations with his family, relations strained from the moment when he had cut leading strings. Had he followed their ambitions instead of his own, he would have been to-day in possession of a 'fixed income.' To his father and mother a fixed income was on all-fours with fixed principles. Perhaps he ought to have kept more in touch with The Laurels. What a name! How could any self-respecting young man keep in touch with that evergreen sanctuary of platitudes and conventions? A laurel hedge, trimly clipped, encompassed a house, built by an architect who believed in and deserved eternal punishment. And the people inhabiting such houses became exactly like them—stucco! Of course, there was the river, the silvery Thames, flowing to the sea, to the ocean. Looking back, he could remember, as a boy, that the river had swept him out of Surbiton. In his canoe he had floated enchantingly out of a prosaic present of ever-recurring examinations into the rosy future of Bohemia. Never had he regretted cutting the painter. And then the war, with its horrors and sufferings, lying behind him, thank God, like a dreadful nightmare! He had never dared to think much about the war. Perhaps it had taught him to enjoy, to make the most of, the passing moment. . . .

No, as yet, he was not like Orford.

## II.

He carried back with him to Manchester a prompt copy of the play at Orford's theatre, and the particular part to be studied by Jess. The copy of the play was to be delivered to Miss Oldacre. Cherry read it through in the train, telling himself that he had something to learn from the well-known dramatist who had written it, possibly with his tongue in his cheek. He wondered whether Orford had commissioned it, because it was a good story, humorously told, cunningly constructed, cumulative in interest, what Orford called 'sound stuff.' Cherrington knew the dramatist, a popular member of The Buskin. He was essentially a man of formulae, something of a 'play doctor.' Unlike Orford, he went to every

show in London, taking note of what pleased the public, keeping his finger upon the pulse of different audiences, sticking his clinical thermometer into every mouth. He could write revue, do a lyric for a musical comedy, interpolate a blood-and-thunder scene in a melodrama. At The Buskin, over a decanter of port, he would wax cynical at the expense of the 'highbrows,' who pursued shadows. It was easy to guess why Pellie had lost his tenner. The *première* of the comedy had been acclaimed by the first-nighters, but, from what Orford had hinted, the box-office returns for the opening fortnight were disappointing. Immediately the author had gone to work, cutting and slashing scenes that languished, adding 'fat' and 'punch'—squeezing the lemon till every drop of juice was extracted. He had turned a loser into a winner by sheer determination and ability. With a public that demanded entertainment there was no other way. To withdraw from the world, as Ibsen had done when he wrote 'Brand,' to evolve from oneself, regardless of all others, something original which might be hailed by critics as a masterpiece, meant courting failure. 'Brand,' of course, was never intended for the stage. It achieved fame as a poem. Given as a play in Copenhagen it lasted from 6.30 to 1.15! Could one envisage an English audience sitting patiently through a seven-hour performance?

Having read the play, Cherrington dismissed it from his mind, and lay back thinking of Jess. He had decided that Jess must be pushed on and up regardless of his own interests. In an odd fashion he had regarded this as a sort of self-inflicted penance. His conscience pricked him whenever he thought of his own people. In a sense he had neglected them. But such neglect had been inevitable. His mother had suggested that he might work at home. Could he work under banal conditions? No. Whenever he appeared in the family circle, it seemed to tighten round him, strangling his imagination. Now he was regarded as an outsider. If he spent a week-end at The Laurels, he was asked, as a *quid pro quo* for very indifferent food and wine, to send tickets for a play. Sometimes he paid for them with a humorous satisfaction. However, the fact bristled and became a hair shirt; he was too self-centred. To serve Jess, to gild her fortunes, enticed him delightfully, producing a sort of glow. And to achieve this end, to satisfy an uneasy conscience, he must scrap self.

We have now, perhaps, accounted for the beaming smile with which he greeted the ladies upon their return from the theatre.

## III.

Jess, certainly, was unaffectedly glad to see her author. His unexpected presence postponed the telling of a tale that might provoke frowns and disapprobation. During supper, Cherrington talked of London and the theatrical slump. He mentioned, incidentally, that Orford's theatre was packed. Miss Oldacre commented upon this, as Cherrington, indeed, had hoped she would.

'It's the best theatre in London, and run admirably. Harry Orford knows his business. I am not sorry to hear of this slump. It means, I suppose, that the boys have not so much money in their pockets, and the Americans are going home. Perhaps we may now expect less saccharine fare. Did you see Lady Crewe?'

Cherrington repeated what Lady Crewe had said. Both Jess and Miss Oldacre were much impressed by his good temper under disappointment.

'Somebody else will do your play,' said the optimistic Nan.

'I don't think so. Orford will read it, but he is up to his neck in scripts, and pledged to the production after this. He doesn't cotton to coster plays. He expects to get back his pre-war audiences. However, one of my sketches is going on at The Coliseum.'

They went on talking shop till Jess felt sleepy and said so, glad of an excuse to escape from a parlour that might become at any moment a confessional box. When the door closed behind her, Cherrington asked his hostess if she were tired, in a tone that excited curiosity.

'You have something to tell me?'

'Well, yes, something jolly and exciting.'

Defrauded of one tale, Miss Oldacre listened sympathetically to another. When Cherrington finished, she stared at him intently.

'You are a remarkable young man,' she observed.

'Am I?'

'You propose to let Jess leave the cast, where she is badly wanted.'

'We can find somebody else.'

'Not another Jess. However, that is your affair and Pummy's. Pummy will kick.'

'I can handle Pummy.'

'What luck this child has . . .! I suspend judgment till I've read the play. I'll help, if I can.'

'I knew you'd say that, bless you!'

'It's a chance in ten thousand. But you,' her placid brows wrinkled, 'I can't understand you, unless——' she laughed.

'Unless——?'

'It has just occurred to me that this wonderful friendship for Jess may be something else. Perhaps you are plotting and scheming to get her to London, where she will be near you.'

Cherry smiled blandly. He had no intention of making a confidante of Miss Oldacre. He said easily:

'I am thinking of letting my small flat, and retiring for a few months to Chagford. On Dartmoor I may get what I want in my new play—atmosphere, freshness. I can assure you of this: I am leaving myself out of the programme. I am thinking of and for Jess.'

'Where is the prompt copy?'

'In my room.'

'Please get it.'

When he returned to the parlour, Miss Oldacre was in her favourite dressing-gown, not the gorgeous rose-brocade. Evidently she had prepared herself for action. Her eyes were sparkling with anticipation. She looked younger, prettier. Cherrington divined that she was prepared to renew her youth which she still preserved because she could live again in others, bathe in their enthusiasms, and emerge from such cleansing waters revivified and purged of the accretions of age.

'I saw the play in London. I can remember it as a whole. Read me the scenes where Jess would appear.'

Cherry obeyed. He could read well, so well that a manager once told him that he read too well; critical judgment was disarmed by his clear, pleasant voice. When he finished, Miss Oldacre rose from her chair, went to a sideboard, and took from it a pint of champagne.

'Open it.'

He did so, filling two glasses. Miss Oldacre held up her glass.

'To Jess.'

Solemnly they drank the toast. Cherry flung his empty glass into the fireplace. Miss Oldacre did the same with a gay laugh.

'What children we are!'

They lit cigarettes and talked. Miss Oldacre had no doubts whatever. Jess would triumph. It would be a joy to coach her in such a part, the same sort of part exactly in which the speaker had triumphed long ago. Picking up the script, the great actress

spoke a few lines. Cherrington was too young to remember her when she bewitched the world. But he could understand why the old boys at The Buskin hailed her as incomparable. The sweetness and grace of her flouted time.

'I should like to kneel down and kiss your shoes.'

He kissed her hand instead.

## IV.

So far, so good. These two stout friends took for granted that Jess would hug opportunity. To their undisguised dismay, the young lady exhibited obstinacy, the obstinacy that had not served her father too well as Commissioner of Burrahbugpore. Miss Oldacre presented the proposition after breakfast, next day. She was so brim-full of it, that she forgot George altogether, till Jess reminded her of the hussar by saying nothing about him. A nimble brain leaped to the conclusion that Jess disdained this astounding offer because George had offered something even more alluring.

'I quite understand,' said Miss Oldacre. 'You are going East, not West.'

'I beg your pardon?'

'To India.'

Whereupon the tale was told. And it lost something in the telling, being served up cold instead of warm. Miss Oldacre nodded, pressing the maid's hand, puzzled and disappointed, but still hopeful.

'I like him so much, Jess.'

'So do I. I wish they would leave me alone.'

'They?'

'This is not my first. I can't compete with Florrie—ten in one year! And I haven't encouraged one, not one. You believe that?'

'Yes, yes; but George is so exactly right. I wonder whether this success of yours has filled your heart?'

Jess admitted as much, adding:

'I want to justify my leaving home.'

'But this London engagement would do that.'

'At Mr. Cherrington's expense.'

'But that is his affair.' Jess remained silent, obtruding her firm little chin. 'I shall leave you to deal with him. Such a

chance is unlikely to occur again. You are in an amazing vein of luck; you ought to back it. Properly launched at Orford's theatre, you will become known to everybody who counts in our profession.'

Soon afterwards, Jess saw Cherry, who exhausted his arguments. Nothing, perhaps, is more exasperating to a young man, as a self-constituted altruist, than to be denied the privilege of helping a friend.

'You have helped me quite enough,' said Jess. 'I can pay part of the debt by playing "Giggles," and I mean to do it.'

'You can go on playing "Giggles" for another two months. By that time, our play will be established. Do you think that nobody else can take your place? Owbridge tells me you were a bit off last night. He asked me to slate you.'

'Go ahead and do it.'

Baffled but persistent, Cherry tried another argument.

'You say you want to help me?'

'Yes, of course I do.'

'Right. Has it occurred to you, that if you get near the front, you might share the limelight with me? You might be able to work Orford. My new play might be done at his theatre with you in the lead.'

This dizzy prospect made the owlet blink. Under more pressure she consented to think it over. Cherrington wisely left her alone. Within a few hours he learnt from Miss Oldacre the fate of the hussar. But his natural satisfaction in a rival's discomfiture was chastened by what followed:

'I believe the child is madly in love with the stage. Just as I was.'

Cherrington demanded biographical details. Nothing loath, Miss Oldacre indulged in retrospection. She had sent half a dozen fairy princes back to fairyland, without regrets then, or thereafter.

'It is a passion in our family,' she concluded.

'Yeo is a fine stage name. It suggests the Spanish Main—doubloons, traffics, and discoveries. If she has it in her——!'

That became the crux of a vexed question, the screaming note of interrogation. Miss Oldacre, looking—so Cherry thought—like Venus, Minerva, and Juno rolled into one, declared her intention of coaching Jess in the new part, whether she played in it or not, adding roguishly:

'Do you think Marguerite would have accepted the pearls, if Faust had not sent them? Wait till the part gets hold of her!'

'By Jove, yes; we shan't have to wait long.'

## V.

Jess was willing enough to study any part under Miss Oldacre. Gratitude overwhelmed her. Under pledge of secrecy she told Florrie that a London engagement had been dangled before her. But she had not reckoned with Florrie's inquisitiveness and perspicacity. Otherwise, she might have confided in the leading lady, who would have perished at the stake rather than ask an indiscreet question. Florrie pounced on the truth, shook it between her teeth:

'Mr. Cherrington worked this.'

'Can't you keep names out of this?'

'Not me. Never could. Well, I must say that he's a boy worth having. Didn't I tell you that he could boom you sky-high? He's willing to let you go out of our cast because he's crazy for love of you. He's a knock-out. Muds said he was a perfect gentleman.'

'The dresser made that observation about him?'

'Muds made it to me. I do hope they won't get a cat to take your place.'

'Don't worry! I'm not going.'

We can imagine what Florrie said, and how she said it, with a brutal frankness that left Jess gasping. Incidentally, she effected what Cherrington and Miss Oldacre had failed to bring about: a change in the point of view. Florrie, somehow, made it aggressively plain that what Cherrington offered so generously must be accepted as generously. Her other argument, rubbed in like liniment, that Fortune must be taken at the flood, that clever actresses grew old and weary in the provinces, was negligible. Miss Oldacre had said the same with twice as much conviction behind it. Then Florrie fired her last shot:

'He means to turn you from a glow-worm into a star. You can pay him in full. Marry him! My! What a combination! And what an "ad." for our show! If you don't marry the pore fellow, he'll go into a decline.'

This conviction had been gleaned from novelettes, but Jess was too distressed to think of that. She recalled what Miss Oldacre

had said about happiness, and its effect on work. Florrie was a comical object lesson. She was happy, and happiness made her attractive as 'Saucy Sal.' If Cherrington were happy, his work would bloom and blossom.

Jess was drinking tea with Florrie when this confidential talk took place. Muds and Florrie were in lodgings not far from the theatre, usually let to just such birds of passage. Mother and daughter shared a large bed-sitting room garishly furbished and furnished. An odour of cheese could be detected by a sensitive nostril. The fire burned with praiseworthy reluctance, piled up with ovoids. Florrie said with mordant significance:

'Your boy can't bear the thought of a room like this for you.'

It was easy for Jess to imagine herself in such a room. Indeed, she had faced the possibility without wincing. Florrie made a grimace:

'This is above the average. And the landladies——! Muds can deal with 'em. Thieves and liars! Muds is sarcastic. This morning we found about two pounds gone out of our ham. The landlady swore she hadn't touched ham since the war. Muds said: "If I didn't know you was the most truthful of women, Mrs. Sharp, I shouldn't believe you." You couldn't curl 'em up that way.'

'No,' said Jess pensively.

Very soon the company would leave Manchester for Birmingham. Cherrington would then return to London, carrying to Orford the yea or nay of Jess. Pumford, meanwhile, was informed by Miss Oldacre of Orford's offer, and asked to give his consent. He did so grudgingly, after he had heard that Jess wished to remain faithful to the present company.

'She is straight. And I suppose we mustn't stand in the way. But can she do it?'

'I think so; I am coaching her.'

'Her luck beats me.'

Upon the eve of leaving Manchester, after three days' coaching, Miss Oldacre told Cherry that Jess was 'eating' her part, assimilating every line of it. She could reproduce the most subtle inflections of the voice, apparently without difficulty.

'It *is* in her,' declared Miss Oldacre with solemnity.

But Cherrington was not permitted to assist at the schooling. He would be invited to pass judgment later. And the fateful decision still rested in abeyance. Jess, possibly, may have expected Cherrington to make love to her. He deliberately abstained,

thereby kindling surprise and misgiving. His friendliness, his easy manner, provoked the suspicion that, as a lover, she might have lost him. Poor George faded out of her mind. If she had to choose between the two men, Cherrington would be taken. She could see herself, dimly, as the wife of Cherrington, living and working in London. It would be an ideal partnership, if she loved him. Did she love him?

There were dark moments when she contemplated seriously a return to Sloden-Pauncefort. She thought she could understand why girls buried themselves in nunneries. Such moments soon passed, because she was sensible of a driving power, either within or without, which she must obey blindly. On the stage, or studying with Miss Oldacre, she forgot all perplexities. And this faculty of detachment appeared to be the God-given attribute of artists. Miss Oldacre had been acting in London when a bomb fell close to the theatre.

'Weren't you terrified?' asked Jess.

'Not till I came off the stage. Then I nearly collapsed. My dresser saved an abject situation. She had rushed into the Strand and seen what she called "remains." She said to me: "This war is getting serious." And I nearly died of laughter.'

'You didn't forget your lines?'

'My dear, in that play I was always forgetting my lines, but never a line failed me after the bomb fell.'

'How wonderful!'

Satisfied with her pupil's ability so far as mere diction was concerned, Miss Oldacre essayed the more difficult task of teaching gesture and deportment. She would make Jess cross the room and sit down twenty times in succession. Merely to listen to this past mistress of the arts was an education. Script in hand, she would pace up and down the parlour laying down her laws with irresistible charm.

'What have we here, Jess? Stage direction, "Leila invites the young man to sit down, with a gesture." I am the young man. Invite me, please, to sit down.'

Jess made a gesture.

'No, no; that is not sufficiently inviting. You indicate a chair. Much more is needed. What is passing through Leila's mind? She expects this young man to propose. She hopes and fears—*and fears*—that he will. She is horribly shy, a-quiver from tip to toe. The gesture must be illuminating, provocative, and

graceful, not so much an invitation to sit down, but an invitation to relieve his mind and hers.'

Jess tried again.

'That is better. But——! Imagine yourself to be Jack. I am Leila. Jack enters, Leila holds out her hand like this . . .'

Jess clapped her hands instead of taking the hand of Leila. In her inimitable fashion, Miss Oldacre had conveyed everything. Leila was revealed to an imaginary audience.

'I can never do it.'

'I shall smack you. My dear father used to say that sometimes he had to make his leading lady cry. Tears seem to relax a woman's muscles and tissues. Try again.'

Good temper and patience triumphed. Admittedly Jess was an apt pupil, amazingly receptive, as Crewe had discovered. But Crewe lacked genius. He had never possessed the Oldacre technique. The schooling was never overdone. A willing horse should not be asked to jump more than twenty fences in a morning. After each fence Miss Oldacre rested herself and her pupil. Jess would ask many questions.

'Can you play when you are ill?'

'I cease to be ill when I play. I can't account for such a miracle. I have left my dressing-room hardly able to speak, with a voice as harsh and hoarse as a crow's. Once on, my voice comes back. I sprained my ankle on the eve of a *première*. I limped on. In a jiffy the limp vanished, to reappear as I made my exit.'

'Christian Science might explain that.'

'Perhaps. I prefer the more obvious word—imagination. I have it; so have you. To work——! Smile deprecatingly! Keep your hands quiet. Do you want the audience to look at your hands or your mouth? That's excellent. Try the smile derisive. Not bad. Now the smile triumphant, as you give it in our play. All those smiles must be on tap.'

Finally, at the last moment, Cherry was invited to pass judgment. If Jess had captivated George with a new frock, we can imagine what effect she produced in Cherry in a new part, a part that exacted a manifestation of all beguiling qualities. At the end he said fervently:

'You must do it. I shall cut my throat if you don't.'

'She will cut her own,' amended Miss Oldacre.

She left them alone. Cherrington was entitled to that. As he closed the door of the parlour and turned round Jess was

'discovered' blushing. He sat down beside her, no longer master of himself, unable to conceal the love-light in his eyes, but self-pledged to endure patiently and silently till the ban was lifted.

Jess, however, remained Leila. And, for the moment, she beheld Cherry as Jack, her stage lover. This may account partly for what followed. Afterwards Jess was unable to determine whether or not she was acting. A spell fell upon her. Certainly she was ignoring the fourth dimension, as Pellie interpreted it. Thoughts of the future vanished. The present became a sort of dream. In Cherrington she beheld the true lover, the type of all true lovers. She was thirsting for his praise, and what else? If he kissed her——! He didn't. He stared at the carpet; he fidgeted with his restless fingers.

'You are pleased with me?'

'I am enchanted.'

Why didn't he look at her?

## VI.

Stealing a shy glance at him, she perceived that his face was white and rigid. Florrie's words came back to her. 'He'll go into a decline.' It was wonderful to think that a man might suffer abominably for love of a woman. She had made George suffer, but he had displayed remarkable recuperative qualities. Within a few miles of Canterbury he was pursuing foxes with an ardour that relieved Jess of serious anxiety. In a letter received from him that morning the hussar had spoken of pig-sticking in India with enthusiasm.

'Are you going to do it?' asked Cherry.

'Perhaps.'

'That won't do, Jess. Orford won't take your "perhaps."'

'I may do this—on conditions.'

'What conditions?'

But Jess was too clever to state the true conditions. Fired by the generosity of her lover, she had soared to a level even beyond his. She had made up a tired mind to marry him, firmly believing that marriage would be best for him and for herself. She would give a good fellow his heart's desire, not analysing too delicately her own sensibilities, sensibilities at the moment in flux. It would be fatuous to attempt excuses for a very young woman confronted suddenly with ambitions which she was too inexperienced to guide

or control. Her knowledge, her conviction, that Cherrington loved her seemed to kindle anger against herself, because she was honest enough to acknowledge that the passion which informed her waking and sleeping hours was the overmastering desire to 'make good' as an actress. And this, elementally, was a selfish ambition. As an antidote to 'self-expression' (even her thoughts resolved themselves into stage terms), she decided too swiftly that conjugal devotion would serve to adjust the balance. Millions of men and women have attempted this compromise with life because they are fundamentally ignorant of life.

She was aware, of course, that if she stated the conditions baldly, Cherrington would be too proud to accept them. Acting, therefore, seemed to be imposed upon her, although she was hardly conscious of this at the time. And she was within measurable distance of loving Cherry as he wanted to be loved. To take the step between friendship and love, to leap gaily across a ridiculously small ditch, became a feat of the imagination. She could imagine so easily what a girl really in love, such a girl as Leila in Orford's play, would say and do. Indeed, as has been hinted already, Leila possessed her. Leila's innocent wiles were at her command, a complete battery. . . .

She answered softly:

'If I refused this wonderful offer, if I remained in your play, what would you do, Cherry?'

Cherrington had not considered this improbability. He answered with a shade of irritation:

'Do? I should want to shake you, I suppose.'

'Shake me—off?'

'You would go your way; I should go mine; I am thinking of Dartmoor as a sort of sanctuary.'

'Dartmoor? Wouldn't you be rather lonely on Dartmoor?'

'I wish you would cut me out of this.'

'But I can't. You have been thinking a lot about me. Suppose that I have been thinking of—you.'

The melting sweetness of her tones, which a less excitable listener might have recognised as belonging to Miss Oldacre, brought colour to his cheeks. Purposely, he had stared at the carpet. Raising his eyes to hers, he beheld what an audience would have recognised as love flooding the grey orbs in which he discovered the reflected image of himself. Upon her drooping lips flickered the smile deprecatory. Her hands, loosely clasped upon her lap, remained

still. It did not occur to him that Leila looked like this, just one minute before the bashful Jack proposed. He remained speechless with astonishment. Jess whispered another sentence :

'I asked you to be patient with me.'

'Heavens! Do you want me to be impatient?'

She blushed the answer. A dimple showed.

If what followed could be translated to the stage, the success of any romantic comedy would be assured. The pretty scene played itself, so naturally, so cumulatively, that Orford would have shed tears because the 'house' was empty. Possibly, the sprites that hover about us unseen enjoyed themselves. Cherrington, tacitly encouraged to betray impatience, was artist enough to curb impatience. A gourmet sips a rare wine slowly. Cherrington took the maid's hand and kissed it from finger tips to wrist. Turning it over, he examined the lines in the pink palm. They stretched —the triple lines of head and heart and destiny—firmly and clearly into the future. He assuaged an ever-increasing thirst upon the Mount of Aphrodite. The nymph surrendered unconditionally when the wandering pilgrim reached her lips. Can we blame him if he mistook the tremors of the virgin, her soft sighs, her beating heart, for the passion which radiated from him?

Unquestionably she was his!

The conditions, never put into words, were accepted.

## VII.

At Birmingham, some ten days later, the romantic engagement became public property. As Florrie had predicted, such a happy combination served as an 'ad.' for the 'show.' Business went up at once. By this time, Miss Oldacre was prepared to 'guarantee' her pupil. Orford, by return of post, submitted a contract, duly signed. Jess was booked to appear in London on Easter Monday. She would receive the same salary as the actress leaving the cast, —a salary, if it continued, that adjusted the problem of ways and means. The path to the altar lay smooth and shining before our lovers. But it did not appear so to Mr. and Mrs. Yeo.

We take a bird's flight back to the Arcadian village.

George, unfortunately, had told his mother that he adored Jess. The thruster admitted that the darling was 'rushed' into refusing what must have appeared to her at the moment the 'leavings' of Miss Irene Seaton, whose tomb dogs were invited to defile.

Mrs. Apperton, forthwith, took tea and counsel with Mrs. Yeo. The two mothers comforted each other. All would be well. A beneficent Providence attended to such affairs, which might be regarded as His particular business. The Squire swore roundly that George seemed to have come to his senses. Jess would be welcomed as a daughter—damn all 'in-laws'—at Apperton Old Manor. Mr. Yeo and he toasted Jess over a glass of '47 port, taken from a bottle—one of five—reserved for sacrosanct occasions. Mr. Yeo, warmed by the ichor of the grape, expressed his conviction that a marriage so exactly right must take place. The dear child had been stage-struck. George, after his own illuminating experience, could be trusted to eradicate all that nonsense. Life in India would 'biggen' Jess!

Upon these delightful and engrossing possibilities fell the news of Miss Yeo's engagement to Mr. Cherrington of The Laurels, Surbiton.

No pen could adequately describe the animosities engendered in two Christian households, now united against a common disturber of their peace. Mr. Yeo found in his wardrobe a black tail-coat smelling of moth-balls, and a pre-war tall-hat rescued from a jumble sale to serve at funerals. Thus accoutred, he took the field and the road to Birmingham. His parting words to his faithful consort indicated at once his feelings and his determination:

'You had better get her room ready. I shall bring her back with me.'

A telegram warned Jess that her sire might be expected that same evening.

He arrived in an unhappy temper of body and mind. Having taken a first-class ticket, he was constrained by perverse necessity to travel the last stage of his journey in the guard's van. Talk with the guard had further exacerbated him. It was intolerable to reflect that Labour, now overpaid, threatened revolution, a general upheaval. Industrial England seemed to have gone mad. The guard happened to be a glib talker, able to hold his own, and eager to acquire more than his own. The rights of the working man to enjoy privileges hitherto denied lay upon his tongue's tip. Mr. Yeo, fortified by the perusal of leading articles in *The Morning Post*, dealt drastically with a public servant. Nature, he pointed out, admitted no such rights as those so impudently claimed by Labour. Place this pack of agitators, whose mere faces as portrayed in the picture press were enough to commend them to the hangman,

upon a desert island and what, pray, became of their right to live? He ended trenchantly:

'There is no substitute for sweat, my man.'

He left the van without tipping the Apostle of the Right to Live, and reached the hotel chilled to the bone, warmed only by indignation. Jess received him with exasperating composure.

'Dear father, we won't discuss anything till you have dined. Then I must go to the theatre. After breakfast, to-morrow morning, we shall be undisturbed.'

'I can say what I've come here to say, Jessica, at dinner.'

They dined alone at half-past six, an hour at least too early for an elderly gentleman the slave of habit. Till he had spoken with and to Jess, Mr. Yeo refused to meet Cherrington or Miss Oldacre. Indeed, as he washed his hands before dinner, he was uncomfortably aware of the astounding change in his daughter, whom, in a vague fashion, he regarded as in league with Labour. 'We shall hear about her Rights,' he reflected.

Jess had engaged a small table in the big dining-room. A big table, not far away, was surrounded with profiteers, who drank champagne with an air which challenged the conjecture that they could bathe in it, if fancy so beguiled them. These stout, red-faced fellows annoyed Mr. Yeo. Their loud laughter jarred upon him.

'Brummagem,' he growled.

'I think they are going to our show,' said Jess. 'I heard something.'

'Show! That describes theatrical performances.'

'Do you want to see the play?' asked Jess. 'You can have a box to yourself.'

Mr. Yeo shook his hoary head as he attacked his soup. He resented the stares of the roysterers at his daughter. His name was on their thick lips. Well, the sooner that honoured name was withdrawn from cheap circulation the better. At the moment, he was in possession of the bare fact of the engagement. Jess wished to marry the author of her 'show.' He was the son of a stockbroker who lived at Surbiton. Whether or not Mr. Arthur Cherrington could support a wife remained to be discovered.

'Will you drink claret, father?'

'Whisky and plain water.'

'But you take soda-water at home.'

'Plain water, please.'

The memory of a first-class ticket wasted in a guard's van still rankled.

'Now, Jessica, has this young man independent means? As a father solicitous for your welfare I must insist upon a satisfactory answer to that question.'

'You can ask him, father. He has supported himself entirely for many years. He won scholarships. He practically paid for his own education at Eton and Oxford.'

Eton and Oxford tickled agreeably Mr. Yeo's ears. He continued in a milder tone:

'The pound to-day is worth ten shillings. I see no reason for hoping that it will be worth more during my lifetime. Let that pass. Are you contemplating a long engagement with a hypothetical marriage at the end of it?'

'Oh, no. Cherry and I hope to be married as reasonably soon as possible.'

'Cherry? You call him—Cherry.'

He frowned portentously, watching straws upon the current. To speak of the man whom you proposed to love, honour, and obey as Cherry, seemed to Mr. Yeo to be turning a sacrament of the Church into comic opera.

'To please you, daddy, I can speak of him as Arthur. That suggests to me the old joke—"Our thermometer."'

This old joke, new to Mr. Yeo, escaped notice.

'Surely you have some idea what your joint income will be?'

Jess brightened.

'Oh, yes. Roughly speaking, something between fifteen hundred and two thousand a year.'

Mr. Yeo was visibly impressed. But he knew nothing of the London engagement.

'You astonish me, Jess. If this young man can earn fifteen hundred a year with his pen, I wonder we have not heard more of him.'

'I said—joint income. I hope to contribute something.'

'Ah! I confess that it's not easy to follow you. Your income, such as it is, a very unsubstantial source of revenue at best, depends upon your remaining on the stage. I take it that this young fellow doesn't propose to traipse round our provincial towns after you? What a life!'

'As to that,' Jess replied, 'it is life, and not stagnation.'

'Stagnation! Is it stagnation to make home attractive, to—to build the right nest, in short, to prepare for the—a—nestlings?'

Jess laughed. Being 'straight,' she valiantly resisted a temptation to tease so ingenuous a sire.

'I have accepted an important engagement in London.'

'Bless my soul!'

'You are as surprised as I am,' said Jess modestly. 'I owe this extraordinary bit of luck to Miss Oldacre and—and Arthur. Of course, I may fail, but I am not very nervous about that.'

'Where is this engagement?'

'With Mr. Orford, at his theatre.'

Mr. Yeo opened his eyes even wider. He stared at a young woman whom he could barely recognise as his daughter. Her air of assurance, her voice, with its new and bewildering inflections, her brighter plumage, confounded him. Pride in her rose first to the surface. Behind this festered the memory of his kinswoman, just as attractive, very dear to him, regarded for many years as a sister. And that Minotaur, the Stage, had swallowed her! Nevertheless, the mere thought of his little Jess upon Orford's time-honoured boards, accepted by the doyen of managers, playing an 'important' engagement, gave him pause. He had, so he told himself, to reconstruct the child, no easy task for a man warped by convention and tradition. He had been, in his autocratic way, a just judge. To prejudge anybody, except a Babu, was alien to him.

He muttered confusedly:

'I shall go to what you call your "show" to-night.'

Jess was delighted. She insisted upon leaving the table to 'phone to the box-office. From this excursion she returned smiling. A box was at Mr. Yeo's service. During her brief absence, the father decided to mark time, and graciously said so. Jess displayed two dimples.

'That is ever so nice of you, daddy. You will see me again in a part not half so good as the one I am offered, and you will form a more critical opinion of Arthur as a playwright.'

Mr. Yeo nodded with Olympian majesty.

## VIII.

Cherrington, at a word from Jess, kept out of the box. It was arranged that he should meet Mr. Yeo on the morrow. But Pumford, round and rosy, received the august visitor royally. The box

communicated with an ante-room, in which whisky and soda and cigars were placed upon a table. Pummy presented a programme. Quite unaware of Mr. Yeo's prejudice against the stage, the little man held forth with enthusiasm upon the new star rising steadily above the horizon. This was before the curtain went up.

'You can prepare for a treat, my dear sir. I opposed your daughter coming to us on general principles. I detest amateurs. I told Miss Yeo that we were overpaying her. We are not. She's a draw. None of us, not even Miss Oldacre, can account for her success. It's the sort of thing that happens once in a blue moon. We can only conclude that it's in her—born in her. Perhaps she harks back to some distinguished actor or actress in your family?'

Mr. Yeo solemnly assured him that this was not the case. Pummy continued:

'Losing her, as we must, is a blow to the box-office. But could I stand in her path, I ask you?'

Mr. Yeo fervently wished that Mr. Pumford could, but he dared not say so. Pummy withdrew, promising to return after the first act.

Mr. Yeo was left alone, caressing nervously his silk hat. Pummy had impressed him as an alert man of business. If it were true that Jess was a star, *and knew it*, his long, tiring journey had been taken in vain. However, of her aptitude for this wretched calling he would trust no opinion save his own. Engrossed in unhappy thoughts, he watched the curtain ascend, and clapped his hands with the crowd when he recognised Miss Oldacre. It is due to him to add that he regarded the famous actress as a genius. She belonged to his generation; she had bewitched him long ago.

Giggles came on and vanished.

Mr. Yeo, of course, had seen the performance at the Castle. It is to his credit as an observer that he recognised instantly the immense improvement in Giggles. The applause that greeted her prepared him for that. And the roar of laughter that followed her exit a minute later sent a shiver down his spine.

'She is a draw,' he murmured to himself.

The fall of the first curtain confirmed this. Pummy appeared, rubbing his plump hands.

'She gets over, Mr. Yeo, she gets over, doesn't she?'

'She gets over me,' admitted Mr. Yeo reluctantly. 'I suppose Miss Oldacre taught her how to do it.'

'Miss Oldacre is the kindest and cleverest of women, but she had the right stuff to work on—the clay. Mr. Cherrington has written up the part. A very clever young man. What a partnership! You agree?'

'I have seen the play at Sloden Castle. It didn't impress me.'

'My dear sir—done by amateurs! May I offer my heartiest congratulations?' Not waiting to observe how these were received, Pummy continued, dropping his voice to a whisper: 'All things are possible when a rising young actress marries a rising young dramatist. Mr. Cherrington will write another "Peg o' my Heart."'

Mr. Yeo, to the utter confounding of the little man, had never heard of 'Peg o' my Heart,' or its author, or Miss Laurette Taylor.

Pummy soon enlightened him.

'The comedy, Mr. Yeo, was written round the actress, and then presented to her—a royal gift. I hesitate to say what that comedy has earned. Shall we say, roughly, a quarter of a million?'

'Pounds, shillings, or pence?' asked Mr. Yeo.

'Pounds, my dear sir, pounds.'

The second act stopped further talk. Mr. Yeo tried to concentrate attention upon the play, but his mind dwelt upon the quarter of a million pounds earned by 'Peg o' my Heart.' If one could believe anybody connected with the stage, such a statement outraged all sense of proportion. He contrasted his labours at Burrahbugpore with the labours of Miss Laurette Taylor's husband. He recalled a paragraph setting forth the earnings of Charlie Chaplin. Nevertheless he kept his eye on Giggles.

When the comedy was over, he became conscious of fatigue, and quite unable to marshal into order a thousand and one importunate reflections. As an honest man he had to admit that Jess and her putative husband shared something that might be described as a triumph. Beyond that conclusion he refused to budge, declining Miss Oldacre's invitation to supper.

He went to bed the most uneasy man in Birmingham.

## IX.

He woke—unrefreshed.

Shaving himself, staring at a troubled face in an unflattering looking-glass, he thought:

'I'm an old man. I was a fool to leave home. There's no fool like an old fool.'

Jess, he realised, was out of hand, beyond his authority, independent of him and the family, with new friends, new interests, and presumably in love with a clever young man whom he had never seen. If he attempted to play the Roman father, he would make himself ridiculous. And soon, within a few years at most, he must go, leaving behind him a strange world that he couldn't understand. That was the dominant reflection as he dressed. He had lived and worked in a world that he did understand. He was grateful for that. In this humble frame of mind he knelt down to pray, as was his habit. He may have repeated his prayers mechanically. In form they had not changed during fifty years. All his long life he had believed in a Personal Deity, whose inscrutable decrees must be accepted. He regarded his present grievous perplexity as a trial imposed by God. Resignedly he commended himself and his family to Omnipotence, and rose from his knees.

Jess poured out his coffee for him. In the bright light of a frosty morning she looked about eighteen, a pretty child. But she was a woman. He must remember that.

'Did you sleep well?' she asked.

'Not too well, my dear.'

'I—I can guess how you are feeling, daddy.'

He smiled grimly, saying nothing. How could any young girl guess his feelings? He was guessing at them himself. He was trying to reconcile an odd pride in her with his ineradicable prejudice against the stage; he was bracing himself for the coming encounter with Cherrington, whose sharp wits might be exercised upon a brain no longer alert, and at the moment strangely fatigued. The soft voice of Jess went on: 'I am a disappointment to you. I am ever so sorry.'

He made a deprecating gesture. Having lived long in the East, he may have absorbed, unconsciously, something of the fatalism of Hindus and Mahomedans. He said mildly:

'This bacon is better than we get at home.'

He was smoking his after-breakfast pipe in a small sitting-room when Cherrington came in.

'This is Arthur, father.'

They shook hands solemnly. Cherrington sat down after a few words had been interchanged, and Jess slipped from the room.

'You want to marry my daughter?'

The old man looked formidable sitting erect in his chair, head up, a massive personality.

'Yes, sir; more than anything else in the world.'

'That is as it should be. Are you able to support her in the—er—comfort to which she is accustomed?'

'I am not in a position to make a settlement, Mr. Yeo. I earn my income with my pen.'

'Just so. I understand that. If your pen should fail——'

His first impression of the penman was not unfavourable. He appeared to be a gentleman, with good manners. There was no taint of the long-haired Bohemian about him.

'If my pen should fail?' repeated Cherry. 'I have considered that. Would you refuse your consent, Mr. Yeo, to the marriage of your daughter to a rising barrister, or a doctor with an increasing practice? A barrister or a doctor might become blind or incapacitated. Forgive me if I mention George Apperton. You would consent to Jess marrying him?'

Mr. Yeo inclined his head.

'He is the son and heir of your squire, but what he earns would not support Jess in comfort. We happen to be living in strange times.'

Mr. Yeo agreed.

'It is impossible to predict what might happen in this country. Land might be nationalised. If a revolutionary party came into power, the squire of Sloden-Pauncefort might find himself cruelly impoverished. That is not very likely to happen, but it might. In the same sense my pen might fail. If it did——'

'Go on!'

'My wife would be earning money.'

'You wish her to remain on the stage?'

'Of course. She wishes it. That is enough for me.'

'What is she likely to earn?'

'That is impossible to say. Anything between five hundred and five thousand a year. I am in the same boat. I can earn five hundred a year and more as a journalist. As a dramatist I might be paying super-tax next year.'

'What did you earn last year?'

'About twelve hundred pounds. My fees for this comedy average about forty-five pounds a week.'

'What a gamble it all is!'

'Life is a gamble from the cradle to the grave.'

Mr. Yeo remained silent. He detested gambling in all its forms, but what could he say, what could he do to prevent a marriage

which he distrusted instinctively? This young man's arguments were sound. He acknowledged to himself that a retired Civil servant on a pension could not refuse consent to a marriage between a rising barrister or doctor and his daughter. And if that daughter could earn an income, dared he raise a finger to prevent it? And if he did, would paternal authority outweigh personal predilection?

He asked a few more questions, dismally conscious that youth must be served, that age had no fighting chance against it. It was some comfort to learn that Cherrington *père* was the head of a sound, conservative business. He might be worth what old-fashioned folk call 'a plum.' To use an expression familiar to Mr. Yeo—he might 'cut up' handsomely. And his son had won scholarships. Apparently he could have passed the Indian Civil Service examination. Had he thought of that?

'I suppose I am ambitious, Mr. Yeo. So is Jess.'

Finally, Mr. Yeo retired from the unequal contest. He did so with a certain dignity and pathos.

'I am an old man; I tread the old paths. I cannot withhold my consent to your marriage with Jess. The details must be arranged with her mother. I take for granted that you come into court with clean hands?'

'I can refer you to my father. Like you, he has a prejudice against the stage, but we are good friends.'

Mr. Yeo returned to Sloden-Pauncefort next day, heartened up a little after a confidential talk with Miss Oldacre. He was surprised to discover that she had favoured George, but she admitted frankly that, at the time, she had not taken sufficiently into account the ambitions and capacities of Jess revealed almost blindingly within the past fortnight.

'She may become a great actress.'

Alone with Mrs. Yeo, Mr. Yeo exhibited a touching humility. Together they walked to the high ground above the village whence a panoramic view could be obtained of the magnificent Forest of Ys and the lovely valley that lay between Sloden-Pauncefort and Melchester. Peace brooded upon the hills and water meadows. The great woods were slumbering, awaiting the touch of spring. They strolled slowly upon crisp heather.

'She has gone out of our lives,' said Mr. Yeo. 'She wants excitements, triumphs, the roar of the crowd. These do not make for happiness. And I can do nothing—nothing!'

*(To be continued.)*

# *JUTLAND AND MONS.*

## (*A COMPARISON*).

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE ASTON, K.C.B.

'ARMIES are not like fencers in an arena, who may shift their ground to all points of the compass.' So wrote Sir Edward Hamley in his 'Operations of War,' upon which book so many British soldiers have been brought up. Lord French attributed to Hamley's influence his salvation, when sorely pressed, from sheltering behind the defences of Maubeuge and thereby probably sacrificing the whole army entrusted to his command.

Fleets, on the other hand, *are* very much like 'fencers in an arena'; they can shift their position to all points of the compass. The Battle of Jutland (May 31, 1916), looked at from that point of view, is extraordinarily interesting. We find Lord Beatty first north-west of Scheer's High Seas Fleet, then working round through north and east to south of it, nearly a complete circle, like a sheep-dog rounding up a flock of sheep. Then, when Scheer tries to steer north-east for the Skager-Rack he finds Jellicoe ahead, deploying the whole force of the Grand Fleet to stop him; working to the eastward (twice) he on each occasion finds Jellicoe deployed ahead of him, and finally he gives it up as a bad job and makes off westward. Jellicoe and Beatty by this time are to the south-east, between Scheer and his base. Then Jellicoe steers southward towards Horn Reef to cut him off in the morning. Scheer, not knowing this, crosses Jellicoe's track diagonally from west to east in the night. Jellicoe, ignorant of Scheer's whereabouts, is south-west of him in the morning and misses him by steering north instead of north-east.

The analogy between the night movements after Jutland and the army movements for the few days after Mons is curious. Scheer, thinking that he was retreating from Jellicoe, was really following him up, and crossed his track diagonally, as we have seen. Von Kluck, thinking that he had destroyed the British army, crossed its track diagonally from west to east and launched an attack against the French Fifth Army, which was north-east of the British at the time. But we are seeking the difference between fleets and armies, rather than an analogy. Let me get back to Hamley.

Following his simile of 'fencers in an arena' comes a paragraph which, in my own younger days, cured me once for all of aspiring to be an arm-chair critic of the doings of great commanders, as described in military history. Manœuvring armies seems so simple if you think of them as marks on a map, so difficult if you know anything at all about them. This is Hamley's passage about army commanders, who cannot move their armies about to all points of the compass:

The most unpractised general *feels* this at once on taking command in a district where his troops are no longer supplied by routine; or, if he does not, the loss of a single meal to his army would sufficiently impress it on him. While distant spectators imagine him to be intent only on striking or parrying a blow, he probably directs many glances, many anxious thoughts, to the communications in his rear. Perhaps no situation is more pitiable than that of a commander who has allowed an enemy to sever his communications. He sees the end of his resources at hand, but not the means to replenish them. Is he to spread his troops to find subsistence for themselves? How, then, shall they be assembled to meet the enemy? Shall he combine them for a desperate attack? How, if that attack fails, are they to be fed? He will then have no alternative but to make the best terms he can, or see his army dissolve like snow. . . . All leaders, then, must feel . . . how considerable must be the prospective advantages for which they will venture, even remotely, to risk the loss of their communications.

An admiral's outlook differs from a general's. Fleets can manœuvre round and round each other 'like fencers in an arena,' without thereby starving each other; as far as food is concerned they could do so for months, only want of fuel, upon which their power of movement depends, compels them in course of time to seek a direction in which it is to be found. There has been much controversy, chiefly based on personal bias, about the Battle of Jutland, and the Admiralty have been pressed in Parliament to set these controversies at rest by publishing an official account, based upon the masses of information contained in ships' logs, wireless and signal records, and so on. Personally, I do not see any need for hurry, and I think that the matter had better be left to historians, accustomed to research work. Now that the responsible commanders on both sides have written books about the battle we know quite enough to reconstruct the story for

ourselves, and there is great human interest in following the events from the point of view of the commanders themselves, and pondering whether we, knowing only what they knew at critical moments, would have done the same as they did.

We first think of Rear-Admiral Hipper with his German battle cruisers (*Lützow*, *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, and *Von der Tann*) slipping at 2 A.M. out of the anchorage in the Jade Basin and making northwards at speed for the Skager-Rack to make a raid on merchant shipping and on any weak British forces to be found in those parts, little knowing that he was likely to meet the combined forces of Jellicoe and Beatty, which had been at sea all night to sweep the very waters for which he was heading. Admiral Scheer with the High Seas Fleet follows at 2.30 A.M. Then we think of Beatty, with his battle cruisers (*Lion*, *Queen Mary*, *Tiger*, *Princess Royal*, *New Zealand*, and *Indefatigable*), turning northwards from his two o'clock rendezvous to join Jellicoe, thinking that once more a sweep of the North Sea had been fruitless, and the monotonous watch for the enemy must again be resumed. Then *Galatea*, the point of his light cruiser screen, about 15 miles away to the eastward, signals her news at 2.35. Jellicoe, away to the northward with the Grand Fleet, which covers, with cruiser screen, over 600 square miles of sea, takes in *Galatea's* news at the same time, gives up zigzagging his heavy ships to puzzle U-boats lying in wait, and works up to a fleet speed of 20 knots to hasten towards the scene, divining the enemy's intentions and sending on Hood's battle cruisers (*Invincible*, *Inflexible*, and *Indomitable*) to help Beatty in frustrating them.

From 3.40 we can imagine Beatty in sight of his enemy, first racing eastward at speed to cut off Hipper—Hipper's abandonment of the Skager-Rack raid, and turn homewards—the running fight southwards, in which the years of training in gunnery are put to the test. At 4.6 the magazine of *Indefatigable* explodes, and at 4.20 the *Queen Mary's*. *Tiger*, racing astern of her, passes through the smoke cloud—all that is left of the splendid ship and that wonderful community of vigorous manhood in the prime of life, a ship's company. But we cannot quite imagine that, or the strain on those who saw it. Then the hit on the turret of *Lion*, Beatty's flagship, which sent the top of the turret, tons of metal, hundreds of feet into the air, the ship herself and all in her having been saved by the forethought of the turret officer (Major Harvey of the Marines), who, after being sorely wounded by a previous

shell, had ordered the magazine to be flooded. At 4.40 Beatty's great mission, locating the enemy, has been accomplished. He sights Scheer's High Seas Fleet and reverses his course, leading the enemy northward towards the Grand Fleet. Evan-Thomas in *Barham*, with his magnificent command of oil-driven *Queen Elizabeth* class of battleships (*Barham*, *Malaya*, *Valiant*, and *Warspite*), took part in the whole action and turned northward, after Beatty, at the same spot. Hipper turns his battle cruisers northward ahead of Scheer's battleships, and a running fight goes on, drawing gradually nearer to Jellicoe's Grand Fleet in the north, hurrying to the scene, and to Hood's battle cruisers, away to the north-east.

Hipper, leading the enemy's forces, is forced from his northerly course to the eastward by a torpedo attack and by the gunfire of Beatty's cruisers and Evan-Thomas' battleships. (His flagship *Lützow* is hit by forty heavy shells in the action, compared with twelve hits on *Lion*, and only one or two lucky ones on *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary*, sunk by magazine explosions.) Hipper's light craft, on ahead, sight Hood's battle cruisers and mistake them for battleships of the *Agincourt* class. Reports to that effect deceive Scheer about the situation and course of the Grand Fleet. He turns farther eastward, presumably to keep open his line of retreat towards Heligoland, past the Horn Reefs. Now, about 6 P.M., the Grand Fleet comes on the scene and begins to show to the northward. Let us join Jellicoe on his bridge. His fleet is not yet deployed. There has been a doubt about the position of the enemy, who has travelled at a fleet speed exceeding the official estimate by about three knots; Jellicoe's and Beatty's positions having been calculated by dead reckoning from the point of starting on the day before, the estimate of their relative positions, and hence of the enemy's, is incorrect by several miles, a natural occurrence in the varying tide-currents of those waters. But all becomes clear when visual touch between Jellicoe's and Beatty's ships has been established; the position and course of the enemy, who is not in sight of the Fleet flagship, are plotted. The culminating point has arrived. There is no time to spare. At Trafalgar the rate of approach of the contending fleets under sail was about fifty yards a minute. The vast assemblies of heavy battleships and battle cruisers at Jutland were racing towards each other, the speed of approach nearing 1500 yards a minute. In a few seconds the commander has to come to a decision upon

which the course of world history may turn, whether to deploy on the port or the starboard division, to the left or to the right. It is now 6.14 P.M. By 6.16 the decision has been come to and the deployment begun; by 6.35 the great fleet is no longer in a line of columns, the approach formation, but in one long deployed line of twenty-eight battleships, including those of Evan-Thomas, who has joined up astern, being too late to cross ahead after Beatty, whose speed has just enabled him to get across ahead of the battleships.

We left Scheer (twenty-one battleships, deployed) with his leading ships forced round to the eastward by Beatty, Evan-Thomas, and the starboard wing (Burney) of the Grand Fleet. On that course he suddenly discovers that he has been out-manœuvred. He finds an endless line of ships to the eastward, ahead of him—the whole Grand Fleet, although he still does not realise this, has 'crossed his T' and prepared to concentrate the whole of their gunfire upon his leading ships if they hold on their course. He, and Hipper ahead of him, turn westward, all ships turning together, a manœuvre upon which the Germans had specialised in their tactical exercises. Then, ignorant of the situation, he turns southwards, and then east again, finding himself worse off than before, with the Grand Fleet deployed ahead of him and Beatty working round to cut off his retreat southward towards his base. Hipper, leading, is forced round to the southward towards Beatty. The climax has arrived, and there seems to be no escape from a hopeless action, out-manœuvred and 'encircled,' as he put it, by superior forces, with his direct line of retreat cut off. He saves himself for the time with consummate skill, launches torpedo attacks, and puts up a dense screen of smoke. Behind this, although his line is bent, the leading ships steering south, the remainder east, he again turns all his ships *together* and makes away to the west. After holding on this course for a time he turns for the Horn Reefs and for home, thinking that Jellicoe had steered north and then westward for his own home ports! But Jellicoe had held on to his southerly course, then turned south-west, and then south again (at 9 P.M.), so that at 9.6, when Scheer turns homewards, Jellicoe and Beatty were in the direct line between him and his base. Beatty, starting originally at 4.40 from a point north-west of Scheer, is now nearly south of him, having steamed almost completely round him! Jellicoe, originally to the north, is now about south-east, interposed astride of what, with armies, would have been

Scheer's line of communication, long lines of lorries and transport vehicles of all sorts carrying supplies, stores, ammunition, and reinforcements forward to the troops; sick, wounded, and perhaps prisoners to the rear. It would be as if Von Kluck had established himself between the British army and its base.

This leads us to Mons (August 23, 1914). Kluck, soon after that battle, did cross the line between our army and Amiens, its advanced base, fed from the coast at Havre. By Hamley, and other military historians, we find the principle laid down that an army, when compelled to retreat, does so almost invariably in the direction of its base. A great exception was the direction of retreat of the Prussian army after Ligny—ordered, it is believed, by Gneisenau, the chief of staff to Blücher, who, rumour has it, had been upset in a cavalry charge and was being revived after that experience. The Prussian direction of retreat, on Wavre, enabled them to intervene at a critical moment on the field of Waterloo. The direction of the British retreat after Mons and Le Cateau enabled them to intervene, refreshed and reinforced, at a critical stage of the Battle of the Marne. How was it that they were refreshed and reinforced, and not starved and dispersed, when Von Kluck had cut across the line of communication through Amiens to Havre? The answer is that, by holding command of the sea, we were able to move the base from Havre to the Loire and to open up a new line of communication, with an advanced base at Le Mans. It was a tremendous achievement, to which too little attention has been paid.

We can form some conception of the dramatic suddenness of a catastrophe at sea, like the explosion of the magazines of *Indefatigable*, *Queen Mary*, or *Invincible*. We can imagine the coolness and determination required of a leader like Beatty forming a momentous decision on sighting Scheer's battle fleet, a few minutes after the top of a turret close to him had been sent spinning hundreds of feet into the air; or the rapidity of judgment called for in Jellicoe when deciding, on hearsay evidence, in which direction to deploy the Grand Fleet. We can feel with Smith-Dorrien in his decision to stand at bay at Le Cateau with his sorely harassed troops to beat off the enemy before continuing his retreat; or with French in his desire for a combined attack as a desperate measure on August 31. But it is difficult to visualise the problem presented to those at Havre who were confronted with the task of moving to another harbour, far less suitable for the purpose, the thousands

of tons of stores and supplies already landed for the British army, and to divert to another route the transport required to take those stores to the front, knowing all the time that, unless the problem could be tackled successfully, disaster to the British army would be inevitable. Not only were stores and supplies affected, but also men and guns. We know now that these were pouring over to fill up the ranks, sorely depleted in the fighting against overwhelming odds at Mons and Le Cateau and elsewhere during the retreat, until Von Kluck had been distanced. We know that instructions had come from the front on August 25 for these reinforcements to be kept in hand for the time. With the direction and speed of retreat in doubt, and the situation apparently obscure, touch with Von Kluck's army having been lost, it would seem that no definite plans could be formed, and no date and destination assigned to the reinforcements. Meanwhile they must have been housed and fed.

How it was all done is one of the wonders of the war. There are historical precedents for such changes of base by armies, supported by sea-power. For instance, Wellington in the Peninsula shortened the line of communication of his army from about 400 to about 80 miles by changing his base from Lisbon to Santander, on the north coast of Spain. In 1882 the British army, and its base, were moved from Alexandria to Ismailia on the Suez Canal. There were similar changes of base by the Japanese in the Manchurian war. Unfortunately historians, having to appeal to a wide public, tell us little about such matters as weights of stores to be moved under such conditions, or the time occupied in movement and in reorganisation of that delicate structure, the line of communication of an army. It is difficult to inspire such subjects with dramatic interest. Nevertheless, it is upon such work that the success of an army in the field in a great measure depends. Kitchener's conquest over Mahdism in the Soudan depended as much upon his patient months of work pushing a railway across the desert as it did upon the great fight at Atbara, or the climax of Omdurman. But we do know, from the official history, the time taken in 1882 to move the British base from Alexandria to Ismailia. Let us remember that on that occasion the move was foreseen as the main plan of operations; there had been plenty of time to prepare, and to work out all the details. The British army affected was smaller by at least 80 per cent. than the army in the Mons retreat, and it had not fought a general action. Then, again, the weights of stores and supplies per man were much smaller.

Yet the official history tells us that the work took twenty-four days. The order for the change of base from Havre must have been given on about August 30. There were no troops between Havre and Von Kluck's army at the time, so the place was open to a raid. Lord French tells us in '1914' that the reinforcements ultimately ordered to come up (by the new route) were well on their way on September 2; and that on the 5th, in spite of congestion on the railways (not to be wondered at, when we consider Joffre's great transfer of troops to form the Sixth French Army north of Paris), the British troops were all in excellent spirits and eager for advance, reinforcements both of men and material arriving. On September 6 the British army, kept supplied the whole time in spite of the change of base, rested, refreshed, and reinforced, marched forward again and crossed the line of the Grand Morin River the next day. And then, after weighing the effect of other factors, of Foch's generalship, of Maunoury's resistance north of Paris, of Gallieni's resource and enterprise, Sir F. Maurice writes in his 'Forty Days in 1914':

I am convinced that history will decide that it was the crossing of the Marne in the early hours of the 9th by the British army which turned the scale against Von Kluck and saved Maunoury at a time of crisis.

It was a fine performance, by an army considered by the enemy to have been wiped off the board as a factor to be considered. It was rendered possible because that army had been supplied and reinforced from a new base. This was rendered possible by sea-power, and achieved by the zeal and resourcefulness of men with whose names we are unacquainted, but to whom due credit will be allotted some day for an achievement without precedent in history.

With these words I can close. There could be no better examples than Jutland and Mons to illustrate the radical difference between sea and land war, and the problems presented to admirals and to generals in command.

## *SCHOOLDAYS WITH MISS CLOUGH.*

It is curious how a word dropped by chance may completely turn the course of conversation, and have the effect of bringing to light something quite new and unexpected. I happened to spend Christmas week with my old friend Pomeroy, when the long evenings gave us ample opportunity to compare experiences and make up several years' arrears of talk.

One evening we were discussing the merits of coloured women —squaws, ayahs, and negro women—as servants, when Mrs. Pomeroy asked me if I did not remember the story of the black woman in the Southern States who bolted a door with her arm when the bolt itself had gone, in order to save the lives of some white children during a riot among the negroes, and kept it there till her arm was broken.

'Where did you hear that?' said I.

'Oh, it's true enough,' was the reply; 'it was in a tale called "The Broken Arm" that Miss Clough gave me when I was a child.'

'You knew Miss Clough?' I asked.

'Yes, perfectly. I was at school with her for several years—in fact, it was the first school I ever went to.'

Seeing that I was much interested, my hostess was kind enough to tell me what she could recollect of those early days, which although merely the impressions of childhood, still so far as they go, present a clear picture of that eminent woman at a period of her career about which little is apparently known. Moreover, the impressions of a child have all the freshness of novelty, with the advantage of being uncoloured by preconceived notions and prejudices such as insensibly affect the judgment of older people.

One can scarcely imagine a finer situation, or a lovelier spot than the one chosen by Miss Clough in following out the occupation for which she was so admirably fitted; a fact which, when the opportunity came, was most amply recognised by the highest authorities, in the bestowal of a position where she was enabled to achieve the greatest distinction possible in her profession.

Eller How, as the house was called, was situated high above the town of Ambleside in the valley of the Rotha, about a mile from Waterhead, the landing-place for the steamboats at the

upper end of Windermere. You looked down upon a perfect panorama of scenery, while behind there were a few rough fields, and then moor and endless hills—the fells of Westmorland. Going up from Ambleside, you went past the old church and vicarage; then higher up were a few pleasant houses, and Eller How was the last and biggest of all, half a mile out; the road up being so steep that the car-drivers always made you get down and walk if they could.

The house was built of grey stone, and stood upon ground levelled out from the hillside, with a broad gravel terrace in front, and 'on each side of this terrace,' said Mrs. Pomeroy, 'was a long border of flowers which were Miss Clough's special care; whenever she had a minute to spare she would go and amuse herself there—I fancy I can see her now with her long black dress; in fact, I think it was her only amusement, because she did not sing or play or sketch, and she managed to have flowers there all the year round. There was a *Pyrus japonica* which she trained up the front of the house; I recollect asking her the name of it, and she told me it was too long for me to remember; then, below this terrace, there was a steep slope of lawn bordered with shrubs and trees where we used to play.

'The schoolroom was built at the back on a level with the upper story, and Miss Clough had the drive brought round and a flight of steps made, so that the day-scholars need not pass through the house. There were about forty of these, from the principal families around, but only two boarders, another little girl and myself. When I first went I was taken by Miss Clough into the schoolroom and introduced to her; she had a white face and black eyes and hair (that's the first thing I remember); she was my only playmate, and had beautiful toys. There was a particular corner in the shrubbery where we used to sit with our dolls, and in the winter we ran up and down the gravel terrace with our hoops—it was always warm there. She was at school a long time, and when she left my sister came.'

'Can you remember anything of the school-work?'

'Well, not much beyond a few odd incidents. We used to read Grecian history—from a book of her brother's, I believe—for I recollect pronouncing the names Alcibiades and Thucydides as if the last two syllables were one. The dictation was what I used to like best. We had that twice a week, and always in pen and ink in exercise books. Miss Clough stood up and read one

line, and as soon as all the girls were ready she read another, but never would repeat a word or a line. She used to say "I give you so much dictation because you learn three things at a time: first, to pay attention; second, you learn to write; and third, you learn to spell. Then, when it's all over, you have something that you will never forget," which is perfectly true. Once we had the description of night coming on, from "Paradise Lost," where it runs:

> "Silence accompany'd; for beast and bird,
> They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
> Were slunk."

I wrote it *shrunk*, for I thought "slunk" was not a nice word. Miss Clough asked me how I imagined that beasts and birds were going to shrink! I didn't know. "If you didn't know," she said, "why did you put it?"'

'Were there any prayers or religious exercises?'

'None in the school. Every morning at nine o'clock, she came in and we all stood round the room in rows, with a Bible in our hands, and each read a verse aloud, and that was all—no explanations; then we shut our Bibles and went to our different classes.'

This must surely be the first instance on record of 'Bible-reading without note or comment,' as the phrase runs now, but I had no idea the practice could be traced to so classical a source. I inquired what they did on Sundays.

'In the morning Miss Clough came to church with us, not the old church, but the new one out in the fields. I used to like that, because sometimes an uncle of mine, who lived at Dove's Nest (Mrs. Hemans' old house), came over and preached, and would take me back to dinner. In the afternoon we had to write out in a book the text and as much as we could remember of the sermon, and learn the Collect, and so on. In a general way, when we had nothing particular to do, she would tell us to write out the Beatitudes.

'Then she was very great on examinations, which went on for a fortnight before the holidays. We had a number of blank books given us for the different subjects, and she would call out the questions; we wrote each one on the top of a page and left the rest blank for the answer; two subjects were taken at the same time, but only every alternate girl took the same one, so that there could

be no cribbing, and Miss Clough would march round and see that there was no conversation. Then marks were given, some for neatness though the answer might be wrong, and there were special examination prizes, different from the general half-year prizes, and they were always sent to us after we had gone home. She gave me several of Miss Martineau's books. Miss Martineau lived near Ambleside, on the Rydal road.

'Another of Miss Clough's ideas was that every girl ought to learn to work. I was very indignant when she told me this, and said, "Ladies don't have to work; they have servants to work for them." "That's all very well," she said, "but how do you know that some day or other you may not be obliged to work? Every girl ought to learn housework and be made to do it herself, so as to know how to do it if the necessity arose." She certainly taught me how to dust, for I remember her showing me in the drawing-room how to pick up each separate piece of china and dust it, and then dust under it and put it back.

'One Saturday she announced that I was going to learn how to starch and iron. I was handed over to Margaret, the housemaid! I watched her make some starch and dip a collar in and then lay it out; I was told to iron it, but I refused, and said ladies had washerwomen to do these things; so I put my hands behind me, and the iron got cold. Then I suppose Margaret fetched Miss Clough, for she told me I must be punished for being disobedient, and sent me into the schoolroom to darn a large hole in an old cotton stocking, which she had cut for the purpose, but I didn't mind that, for I was very fond of sewing—it was no punishment to me. We had sewing-class in school every afternoon, she was very particular about it; in fact, it's entirely owing to Miss Clough that I can sew so well as I do.

'Although she was so strict we liked her, because she was so perfectly just. She never broke her word, nor even let us off any punishment she gave us, not a hair's-breadth; but then she never punished us unless we deserved it. She had no favourites as the governesses had, and never called us stupid when we made blunders; neither would she jump to conclusions, though it might appear that a child had done something wrong when it had not, but she would inquire and make allowances. I never knew her to lose her temper, or bully, or even raise her voice, so that although she was so stern and precise and never smiled, we were very fond of her. In fact, she seemed to be more like a man.'

'Exactly,' observed Pomeroy; upon which Mrs. Pomeroy said, 'Well, she certainly had many good qualities which are commonly supposed to be masculine qualities.'

'Did Miss Clough ever take you back to the ironing again?' I asked.

'No, that was the only practical application of her doctrine in that way. You see that sort of thing was utterly different from anything we had been taught at home; we were always told that servants were meant to do work of that kind, and we were not allowed to have anything to do with them or their work. I considered it was a great insult, a slight put upon me, and possibly Miss Clough thought I was too young to have the lesson enforced.'

'Did she do nothing by way of amusing you?'

'We were never taken to amusements of any kind, such as a circus, for instance. She seemed to think that amusements were unnecessary, that children must play because it was good exercise. We were sent out in the garden to play with hoops or at hide-and-seek, but always given to understand that it was a business, and that exercise was good for us, but otherwise a waste of time, which would far better have been spent in studying.

'We were frequently taken for walks, but always away from the town; she would never let us go into the town if she could help it. Our favourite walk if we were allowed to choose was to Sweden Bridge—Mary Arnold and myself and a governess; sometimes Miss Clough went. You turned out of the road into a narrow, steep lane with a stone wall on each side for some distance, so that in wet weather this lane was a running stream. One winter there had been a great rush of water from the hills, which swept all down this lane, when suddenly the weather turned very cold and the flood of water was frozen solid. But the lane was so rough, and full of stones, that we were able to go for a run; and I fancy I can see Mary Arnold now jumping from one stone to another, flinging her arms about and gesticulating with delight.

'Beyond the lane you got on to the fells, and followed a rough track which led alongside the rushing water below. There was no wall of any sort, and if you looked over the side and the stream was full, you could see the white splashings of the foam. After half a mile along the open track the bank at the side of the stream became less steep, and you soon came to a bridge (Sweden Bridge), where you could get down to the water, and there we used to play and catch minnows or anything we could find. The bridge was nothing

but an arch about three feet wide, built of rough stones, with grass growing on it, except in the middle, where the sheep kept it clear. Miss Clough told us it was a Roman bridge, made without mortar, the stones being shaped broader at the top than at the bottom and then fitted together. I asked why they made it so narrow that the men could only cross one by one, if the Romans built it for their soldiers to go over? She smiled, and said it was only built for ordinary use. My idea of soldiers, of course, was of a regiment marching four abreast.

'There was another bridge over the Stock Gill, near Ambleside, which she told us was one of the same kind. On this bridge a little house was built, so that in order to cross you had to go through the house. A very old man lived there, with a long white beard flowing below his waist; he used to make baskets, and if Miss Clough wanted one, or we wanted a doll's cradle, we went to him. He would come out and stand in front of the house and talk to us.

'Another favourite walk was to Rydal Water, where Wordsworth's house was. We used to climb up a mound that was just on the edge of the lake, with a rock and some trees on the top. She said that Wordsworth liked to sit up there and look out over the lake, and that probably many of his poems were written there. This was shut off from the road by a wooden paling, and you went through a wicket-gate into a little path and climbed up some rough steps cut out of the side; at the top there were rocks and ferns and trees, with room enough to run about, but the other side went steep down into the lake.

'Once Miss Clough took us to Rydal Mount, a little one-storeyed house covered with roses and honeysuckle; but the place was all dismantled, with a sale of furniture going on, and people trampling down the flower-garden. She took us in because Wordsworth had lived there; I remember thinking what a shabby little place it looked, because I imagined that a poet would live in a castle or a mansion. We got through to a dark back-kitchen or scullery where there was an old spinning-wheel standing in a corner, evidently looked upon as lumber, and Miss Clough said that it was in the house when Wordsworth lived there.'

'Were you ever taken to see any of her friends?'

'Yes. Her great cronies were Mrs. and Miss Claude. Miss Claude wrote a small book of poems called "Blades and Flowers," which she gave me. They had a German niece living with them,

and the book is dedicated to her and her sister. They kept up the custom of having Easter eggs, German fashion, and these would be hidden in the garden. There was always a party at Easter, and Miss Clough came with us to help find these eggs. Once she found three in a lavender-bush, and she used to unbend on these occasions and play with us, which otherwise she very seldom did.

'While we were at school with her, once a year there was a festival called the "Rush-bearing," which she told us was the last remnant of the custom of strewing rushes on the floor of the church, Ambleside being one of the last places where this custom was kept up, and she always took us to see it. We went down to the church, and all the village children came with the bundles of rushes which they had gathered, tied up with wreaths of flowers, and brought them into the church; some of the rushes were made up into the form of a cross. Then there was a short service and address and two or three hymns. There is a hymn in Miss Claude's book which was written for the Ambleside rush-bearers by an incumbent of Langdale Chapel:

"Our fathers to the house of God,
As yet a building rude,
Bore offerings from the flowery sod,
And fragrant rushes strew'd."

'I suppose you still have a vivid impression of Miss Clough?'

'Oh, perfectly. You would never think from her appearance that she knew how to smile, she looked so grave and stern. She must have been very tall, because she towered above everyone in the church, and was taller than any of the people in the crowd coming out. There was an old man called Zephaniah Kettle—Mary Arnold always said he wore stays. He was a tall, thin old man, and used to be in front of us in the crowd going home down a narrow lane; he wore a long shiny frock-coat, and below his waist all round there was a ridge, and she called him "the man with the stays." Miss Clough was taller than he.

'She always wore a black dress, perfectly straight, which looked very odd, because all the ladies wore crinolines at that time. Once only she launched out into grandeur, and that was at a party at Mrs. Claude's, a children's dance, when she wore a grey silk, and we looked at her with the greatest admiration all the evening. She was very dark, with black eyebrows and a mass of snow-

white hair, but her face was quite smooth, and without a wrinkle. I used to stroke her cheek with my finger. Her eyes were jet-black, and if she was angry they used to blaze. She had a masculine face, large nose, a square jaw, and a magnificent set of teeth. She was very strong, and never ill, and I never saw her sit in an easy-chair, but always in one with a straight back. She never wore ornaments.

'I recollect she was a homœopath, and dosed us with sugar-pills. We used to pretend we were ill sometimes, we were so delighted with the medicine-chest, and thought what a jolly thing it would be to play with. She was very careful of us in the way of not letting us go out into the cold without being wrapped up, but there was to be no coddling or self-indulgence of any sort whatever; she never indulged herself, and did not allow it in anybody in her house. There was no lying in bed, nor hot water in the mornings. We had to wash the winter through with lumps of ice in the basin, and we were never allowed to warm ourselves by the fire if we were cold. I had to practise on the piano in a cold room on bitter winter mornings by the light of a candle.

'The food too was of the plainest, and occasionally we protested. For instance, once there were a lot of gooseberries that had been bottled which we didn't care about, but they were made into puddings, and when I said I didn't like this, Miss Clough told us we must not be fanciful about what we ate and drank. Mary Arnold and I used to go into the store-room and count the bottles of gooseberries to see how many more there were for us to eat before they would all be finished, and I remember our making hideous grimaces at each other when they came on. But she never would indulge us, or put up with any of our whims.

'I was also told not to be fanciful when I had a basin of bread and milk atrociously smoked, evidently cooked on a fire just lit, which I had to eat before the usual breakfast-hour in a cold dining-room without any fire, because I had my music lesson while the others were at breakfast. It was while I was practising that I got the idea that Miss Clough was not musical, because I found out that I might neglect my exercises and try to pick out the tunes at the end of the book, and although her bedroom was near the music-room, she did not detect it, and never stopped me.

'That reminds me that in her bedroom she wore mocassins with pointed toes like those [pointing to a pair of Chippewa mocassins that were hanging on the wall], only embroidered with

grass instead of beads. Mary Arnold called them wash-leather slippers, and asked me if I had ever seen anyone else with them.'

'Was this little girl one of *the* Arnolds?' I asked.

'Yes, a granddaughter of Dr. Arnold. Fox How, where Mrs. Arnold his widow lived, was only a short distance away, near Rydal Water.'

'Rather a tremendous name to live up to, isn't it?' remarked Pomeroy. '"Dr. Arnold's Life" was one of the few books I ever read of my own free will, and whenever any of his family are mentioned, I always wonder whether they resemble him in any way.'

'Well, of course, I know nothing about Dr. Arnold,' said Mrs. Pomeroy; 'but Mary had a very decided character of her own, as well as a pretty vivid imagination, for the odd things she used to say, merely on the spur of the moment, would quite stagger me sometimes. Once when we were going along the passage upstairs leading to the schoolroom, she stopped at one of the gratings where the hot air came up from the furnace, with holes in the pattern about the size of a shilling, and told me that she knew a little boy whose head was so small that he could put it through one of those holes: and after we had gone to bed she would tell me the oddest stories in a whisper, because it was against the rules to talk.

'But I implicitly believed whatever she chose to tell me, so that you see we both enjoyed ourselves. I think now that her fancy used to run riot with her, and of course she had to give vent to it in any way that suggested itself. Her energy and high spirits were something wonderful. Out of doors she was never still, but always running or jumping or playing, and she invariably tired me out at this sort of thing.

'Still nothing came amiss to her in the way of amusement; anything that entered her head would answer the purpose, and she was never at a loss. I recollect she had a lovely doll, which her aunt, Mrs. Forster, had given her, all made of wax. Once she was annoyed with this doll for some reason or other, and broke it up into little bits. Of course I was as pleased as possible. We put the bits into little saucepans and melted them over one of the gratings I told you of. Sometimes Willy Dolly (that was the name we had for the general factotum) would let the fire go down, and then the gratings were cold, and other times he would have a roaring fire, and then they would be so hot that you couldn't touch them. So we melted the wax, and moulded it into dolls' puddings, and that was the last of her wax doll.

'One day we were over at Fox How, which was a pretty house, with a wide lawn and gardens. I think it must have been built on the same plan as the old vicarage at Ambleside, for when we went to a party there once I know I was surprised at being able to find my way about the house. One side of Fox How was covered with a handsome Virginia creeper, which was thought a great deal of, and of course was not intended to be meddled with. Suddenly it occurred to Mary that it would be first-rate fun to pick "all these red leaves," and I obediently went and helped her. We cleared a great bare space all along the wall as high as we could reach, but from what Miss Fanny Arnold said when she came out and discovered what was done, I gathered that she was not so pleased with our work as we were ourselves.'

'Do you remember Mrs. Arnold or Mrs. Forster?'

'Oh yes, quite well. Mrs. Arnold was a tall, stately old lady with a Roman nose. I used to go over with Mary Arnold to Fox How sometimes on Saturdays, and once Mrs. Forster was there with two of Mary's little cousins (? the Arnold-Forsters). Mrs. Forster was very nice, and after dinner we all went out for a walk. She carried the bigger of the two children, which rather surprised me, but when I asked why she carried the big one and not the small one, she said that he had hurt his back and couldn't walk. Then we went into a steep field and she set him down on the grass; he sat quite still and I felt sorry for him, so I went down to the bottom and picked a quantity of rushes and scabious, and showed him how to plait them into a crown. This was a favourite amusement of Mary Arnold's and mine; we used to make these crowns and present them to different people, but we never could get them to wear the ornaments, strange to say. The boy was delighted, however, and put on the crown, and when Mrs. Forster came back she was very pleased, and said she would give me a doll with real eyelashes, exactly like Mary's. After that we used always to be looking out for it, and discussing whether the carrier would bring it or how it would reach us. But that doll never came, and it hasn't come to this day.'

So evident was the feeling of disappointment that I was just about to sympathise with the child, quite forgetful of the lapse of time, when fortunately another question occurred to me, and I asked whether she was at Eller How when Miss Clough was called away to her brother in Italy.

'Yes,' was the reply, 'I remember that perfectly. Miss Clough

came into the schoolroom one morning to tell us she had been sent for, and was going away to see her brother who was very ill at Florence. She hoped we should be good and mind what the governesses said, but she knew quite well we didn't care a straw for them. My sister was there then, and while Miss Clough was away we slept in her big bed with great curtains all round. It never struck us, by the by, that she ought not to have indulged in a feather-bed while we only had a mattress, but we had a high old time making tents and playing Red Indian and what not.

'She was away some time, and we were very glad when she came back. She brought us each a present, and some acorns and branches of cork, and gave us a lecture on Italy a few days afterwards. She told us that when the Italian women went out they carried their fire with them, and sat on a box with holes in the top and a charcoal fire inside to keep themselves warm, which I thought was a capital arrangement.

'After Mary Arnold and I had both left Miss Clough's we used to write to each other sometimes, but as we got older we naturally lost sight of one another.'

'Haven't you any idea who that little girl is now?' Pomeroy asked me.

'Not the least,' said I. 'I've been out of the country long enough to lose track of many of those things that I dare say one ought to know, but for choice, I should say she was the wife of a bishop.'

'No,' he replied, 'someone far more distinguished; she's Mrs. Humphry Ward.'

A pause—during which 'Robert Elsmere' and the rest flashed through my mind—and then the conversation drifted into other matters, for, thinking I had already trespassed enough on my hostess's good nature, I refrained from troubling her with any more questions on that occasion.

T. C. Down.

# *BALBUS.*

BY CHRISTOPHER STONE.

'I MUST ask you to step across the way,' said the shopman politely. 'The lead vases are in our warehouse. We have so little room here.'

He picked up his hat from a Jacobean chest, took down a heavy key from a hook by the door, and ushered his customer, a middle-aged man with a bronzed face, out into the lamp-lit square.

'Is it far?' asked the other.

'Two minutes' walk, sir, if you don't mind.'

It was a chilly autumn evening, at that precious London hour between sunset and shop-shut, when the darkness is relieved and mystified by the glare from innumerable windows. Mr. Barn, prowling in a neighbourhood which brought back memories of his young days, had found himself in front of the tantalising windows of an old furniture shop, and had ventured inside on the chance of discovering some vases that would suit two niches in the loggia of the house which he was furnishing in Hampshire.

He followed the polite shopman round one corner of the square, and by way of conversation said:

'I wonder if you can tell me what has happened to the old school in Sholto Street. It's not going still, is it?'

'Leland's Grammar School, do you mean, sir?' asked the other, pausing and turning to let Mr. Barn catch him up.

'Yes, that's it.'

'Why, sir, that's our warehouse,' said the shopman. 'We are just going there.'

'Your warehouse?' Mr. Barn repeated. 'That's queer. I have just been round there, looking at it and wondering what had happened to the old place. I was at school there once.'

'Indeed, sir? Yes, it came to an end many years ago. We use it for our larger stuff.'

They turned out of the square into Sholto Street, a cul-de-sac, with one melancholy lamp-post at the far end, close by the railings that enclosed a large house built in the Palladian style, with five wide steps leading up to a massive double door between pillars. Along the pediment, in letters which time and the autumn dusk

had almost obliterated, was inscribed 'Leland's Grammar School.' An air of indescribably sullen melancholy hung about the edifice, which had for so many years been accustomed to the sounds of boyhood, and which now awaited nothing but dissolution and release from the thick cobwebs of memory.

Mr. Barn was moved to the heart. A quarter of an hour earlier he had stood on the pavement, peering through the railings and trying to catch a glimpse of the corner of the playground which had been often in his thoughts during the last thirty years. Now chance had given him an opportunity of penetrating to the interior, and he waited impatiently on the worn steps while his companion fumbled with the heavy key and turned it in the creaking lock. A breath of cold stuffiness met them as they entered, and there was a further delay while the shopman lit a dirty candle in a dirty candle-stick, which stood on a dirty oak chest close to the door. The whole place was unpleasantly dirty. Furniture crowded the hall, but to Mr. Barn, in the flush of reminiscence, it was bare, austere, and practical; *there* were the pegs on which coats and caps used to be hung, though the boot-lockers had gone; and *here*, yes, positively he could feel on the wall the nails which had held the notice-board. He ran his fingers down the side-post of a doorway on the left, and smiled gently to himself as they came upon some initials carved in the wood-work. Thereby hung a tale.

The hall was lofty and spacious. In the middle, opposite the front door, a broad flight of stairs led to the basement; on the right was the staircase to the upper floors.

'Downstairs, if you please, sir,' said the shopman, holding the candle above his head. 'Can you see the steps?'

'I could run down them with my eyes shut,' said Mr. Barn. 'The fifth one always used to crack loudly if you jumped on it—so,' and to his delight, the house resounded to the report of the oaken board. 'And I remember, too,' he continued, 'that we had a trick of pretending to fall down these last steps.'

'Mind, sir!' ejaculated the other, as Mr. Barn stumbled with a clatter of heels down four or five of the stairs and alighted on his feet at the bottom, fairly chuckling at his own agility.

'I'm glad I haven't forgotten that trick,' he said with satisfaction. He did not care whether the shopman thought him mad or not.

The basement extended under the whole of the house, an

admirable playground in all weathers for children. On three sides it was walled in, but on the fourth it opened, through four large arches, into an out-door playground of smaller extent. In the uncertain candle-light, Mr. Barn was aware of furniture stacked to the ceiling, of a herd of Flemish wardrobes huddling in one corner, of an elaborately carved pulpit set up against the wall, no doubt the spoil of some dismantled City church.

'The vases are out here,' said the shopman, unlocking a door in the matchboarding that filled the nearest arch. 'Mind the step, please sir.'

Mr. Barn found himself once more in the playground sacred to the memory of football and prisoner's base. It was littered with stone-work, fragments of terraces, piles of paving-stones, window-frames, pedestals, figures. A little girl, kneeling in an attitude of supplication, looked up at him with rigid eyes.

'That's rather quaint,' he said. 'What sort of price is it?'

'That, sir? Three pound ten. A pretty little piece.' He laid his hand phrenologically on the girl's head. 'Stone, sir—stand any amount of weather.'

'H'm,' said Mr. Barn. He was visualising a little corner of his Hampshire garden where the low wall ended abruptly within sight of his study windows. It wanted something to finish it off.

'These are the vases, sir,' the persistent shopman interrupted.

'Eh? Those? Oh, they won't do; much too clumsy.' Mr. Barn dismissed them with a glance. His mind had returned from the Hampshire garden to the playground, as his next remark showed. 'Tell me,' he said, 'you've filled in all those arches, haven't you? They were open in *my* day.'

'Yes, sir, we did—it keeps the damp out a bit. There's another vase, but it's a single one——'

'And that middle arch was bricked up already, wasn't it?'

'Yes, sir, I think it was.' He swung the candle nearer. 'Yes, sir, this one is brick. The vase I was speaking of——'

'I built that wall,' declared Mr. Barn with great satisfaction.

'Indeed, sir?' Politeness could go no further.

'Alone, with my own hands. The pile of bricks lay over in that corner. I built it one Christmas holidays—you see I lived quite close, in Bedford Square, and old Mr. Charnock, the schoolmaster here, wanted that middle arch blocked up—so *I* did it.' He chuckled. 'Lord! how funny it all seems. I've been building walls and things ever since.'

'A curious coincidence, sir,' the shopman admitted. 'Now would you care to look at that vase I've got over there?'

'No, thanks.' Mr. Barn's tone was abrupt. 'I'll have that little Praying Girl, if you'll send it down to the country for me. She looks lonely here: no one to look after her: wants to be rescued, I dare say.'

'Thank you, sir. It's a very favourite little piece with the lady who lives in the house. She'll miss it a great deal, I expect.'

'A lady lives here?'

'Yes, sir—on the top floor only. Perhaps you know her, sir, Mr. Charnock's daughter.'

'You don't mean to say she still lives here!' exclaimed Mr. Barn. 'Is the old chap dead?'

'Oh no, sir, he's not dead; but he's a bit broken down in health nowadays.' The shopman nodded significantly. 'Mind a little weak, if you know what I mean, sir—senile decay, yes, sir. Miss Charnock looks after him.'

'Dear me, what strange things do happen!' said Mr. Barn, as they made their way back into the basement and to the foot of the stairs.

In the last quarter of an hour he had lived over in his mind a great part of the years spent at Leland's Grammar School. Dr. Charnock had always been an old man: his heavy benevolent face and high domed head had always been those of a patriarch, his grey beard and rolling voice had seemed to the boys to be something venerable. By this time he must be a veritable Methuselah. And Mary Charnock, who had been a beauty of twenty-one when Mr. Barn left school, whom, like all the other boys, he had worshipped with a wonderful and unsophisticated devotion, though she was supposed to be engaged to the usher, Mr. Pindrop—what would she be like?

Mr. Barn made up his mind.

'I think I may as well call upon Dr. Charnock, as I'm here,' he said, 'if you'll just take down the address to send that statue to.'

While the shopman put down the candle-stick, and fumbled in his breast pocket for note-book and pencil, Mr. Barn wondered whether he should ring the front door bell, or should walk straight upstairs and announce himself. But he was saved the trouble of a decision, for, while they were in the hall, steps were heard coming up to the front door which was ajar, and in a moment Mary Charnock stood before them. If he had met her in the street he would probably not have recognised her; but here and now she was unmistakably

the same woman who had once been in his eyes the most adorable creature in the world.

When he introduced himself to her, her tired eyes lit up with genuine pleasure.

'Of course, I remember you. You built the wall in the playground. "Balbus" Barn!'

They laughed together at the absurd nick-name which had been buried for so many years.

He told her how strange he found the coincidence, and then he asked after her father.

'He's very well, thank you. I suppose you couldn't spare a minute to come upstairs and see him? It would be a great kindness.'

'If it's not inconvenient to you——'

'Not a bit. You must take us as you find us, of course. I'm out all day, and things don't tidy themselves.'

She spoke cheerfully, but he could see how weary she was, weary of work and care and monotony and hopelessness—of everything. He bade the shopman good-night after giving him his address, and prepared to follow Miss Charnock upstairs. She took the candlestick which stood on the oak dresser.

'So you've just bought my little Praying Girl?' she said. 'I'm glad she is going to a kind home.'

'I wouldn't have bought her if I had known that she had *you* to look after her,' said Mr. Barn. 'It was only a whim on my part: she seemed to look at me so pitifully with her blind eyes—among all that rubbish.'

'Father is nearly blind now,' she said. 'It's a great trial for his patience. He has to stay indoors alone all day; but I generally take him for a walk in the evenings when I come back.'

It appeared that she had pupils during the day, children—'I am fond of children,' she said, 'though it's not easy work'—and gave singing lessons occasionally. Her brief reference to her occupations suggested to Mr. Barn's mind the eternal tedium of a governess's life, short engagements, unsympathetic parents, walks in Kensington Gardens, splitting headaches, fractious boys, the prim figure at the luncheon-table, innumerable pettinesses and insults. Poor Mary Charnock!

The uncarpeted house was thronged with furniture, and as they made their way up the bare staircase to the first and second floors, the flickering candle shone fitfully upon mirrors and girandoles and

a medley of sporting prints grouped promiscuously on the walls. As they approached the top floor they heard the quavering voice of the old schoolmaster as he sat in the dark chanting Virgil to himself with a vigour which was evident in the intonation rather than in the volume of sound.

> 'Namque sub Œbaliæ memini me turribus arcis,
> Qua niger humectat flaventia culta Galæsus,
> Corycium vidisse senem . . .'

And Mr. Barn, among whose eccentricities was the preservation of a tolerable Latinity into middle age, recognised the lines, and the masterly thumb-nail sketch of the old man tending his few acres of unproductive land, the old man of Corycus who 'had a heart that matched the wealth of kings'; and he stood in the doorway listening with something not far from reverence to the noble lines which the old schoolmaster chanted in the twilight of the room and of his mind.

Mary Charnock went forward and touched her father's hand and kissed his forehead.

'Father, I've brought an old friend of ours to see you, Mr. Barn.'

Mr. Charnock's face clouded, his brow wrinkled.

'Barn?' he muttered in a puzzled voice. 'What Barn? I'm such an old fool—my memory——'

'You remember Balbus Barn, who built the wall downstairs in the playground?'

She was very gentle with him, and enunciated her words carefully.

'Balbus Barn? Oh yes, yes, to be sure. Is he here? Where is he?'

Mr. Barn came across the room and took an emaciated hand, that was waving in the air, in his own.

'How'd you do, sir? I'm delighted to see you again and to hear Virgil properly spoken again. The merest chance, meeting Miss Charnock downstairs—a very lucky chance.'

'You remember that bit of the Fourth Georgic, eh? Splendid stuff—very swell. And these incredible fools think they can do without the classics!'

'We know better, sir.'

'Eh? Now I'm an old crock, alone all day, can't see, can't hear, can hardly move, what could I do without 'em, eh? Do logarithms in my head, eh? Spout Herbert Spencer, eh? Rubbish.'

While they talked, Miss Charnock had lit the gas and a stove on

which she boiled a kettle and made tea for them. The light revealed a room from which all superfluous furniture had been banished in the interest of blindness. A deep arm-chair for the old gentleman, a square table for meals, a couple of leather chairs, a sewing-machine, a typewriter, a book-case, a few faded photographs of school groups on the walls, and little else. It was an austere attic for Miss Charnock to live in, and no view out of the one window but the balusters of the parapet.

When Mr. Barn left, an hour later, he took with him a keen sense of discomfort, a sense that one feels after witnessing some situation that ought to be otherwise, a sense of a personal responsibility and a personal duty to alter it. He had promised to call the next morning in order to take Mr. Charnock for a walk, and as they went through Regent's Park, and, later, as he read the morning paper to the old schoolmaster in the dingy attic, he was oppressed more and more by the knowledge of the unrecorded sacrifices that the daughter had made on the altar of filial piety. Mr. Charnock himself spoke helplessly of them, called her his Antigone, his Cordelia; told with tears in his voice how hard the struggle had been for her, how patient she was, how thoughtful. It was all infinitely distressing for Mr. Barn, and every time that he went to the desolate warehouse of Leland's Grammar School, he was more deeply distressed. One afternoon, in the course of evoking memories for the pleasure of Mr. Charnock, he chanced upon the name of Mr. Pindrop, and a constraint fell palpably upon the trio in the attic till the subject was changed. On the following morning the old schoolmaster referred to it.

'You mentioned Pindrop yesterday. He was engaged to my daughter Mary for some time.'

'I remembered that he was. It was tactless of me to mention him. The engagement came to nothing?'

'No, nothing. I lost the use of my eyes at a critical moment, when marriage was in sight for them. Mary refused to leave me: Pindrop could wait no longer—a bad business altogether,' he mused; but, somewhat to Mr. Barn's amusement, he cheered himself with the reflection, 'I expect Mary was very well rid of him. He was a snuffling fellow.'

Insensibly Mr. Barn became an irregular visitor and a regular friend of the Charnocks. Whenever he was in London, he made a point of going to Sholto Street at four o'clock and reading the paper to Mr. Charnock, and having tea ready for Mary on her return. At other times he wrote to her from his Hampshire home, reporting

on his house-furnishing, his garden, his new lawn; anything that would rouse a flicker of interest in the jaded brain of the old man. That he was in his dotage was a fact not disguised any longer by Mary, and, on one occasion, when she was overwrought with work and worry, she had allowed Mr. Barn to see her tears, a terrible experience for that sensitive gentleman. So sensitive was he that it took him several days to overcome his scruples and to summon up his resolution to the point of inviting the Charnocks down to Hampshire for Christmas. Mary was to have a week's holiday from her pupils, and Mr. Barn was sure that country air would be good for her and for her father. Besides, she must see the statue of the Praying Girl in the corner in the garden. The invitation was accepted, with hesitation. 'Father fears the train journey,' she wrote; 'and, indeed, I am apprehensive myself. But it will be a great treat for us if we can manage it, and we cannot thank you enough for your kind thought.' Kind thoughts thronged Mr. Barn's mind; he would hire a motor-car to bring them down; he would buy a gramophone to beguile Mr. Charnock; he would have walks and talks with Mary in the keen fresh air, among the pines. But the plan fell through: Mr. Charnock's health was not so good when the time drew near; he was 'very poorly,' his heart troubled him. This was a great blow to Mr. Barn, who had founded so many day-dreams upon the flimsy prospect. But he was not in a mood to be baulked. He went up to London, and after a morning's shopping and a meagre meal, fetched Mary Charnock, who would not leave her father to a lonely luncheon, and took her to a *matinée* at His Majesty's Theatre. She so seldom went to the playhouses that the experience was one of sheer pleasure and entrancement. The dark frosty air cooled her throbbing brain as they walked up the Haymarket afterwards.

'Shall we have tea somewhere before we go back?' he suggested.

'No, no, not to-day, please,' she answered. 'Father will have been waiting, and I'm dreadfully late already. Some other day—when he is better.'

Mr. Barn hailed a taxi.

'I *have* enjoyed myself,' she sighed, as they clattered past the lighted shops of Shaftesbury Avenue. 'You have no idea.'

'I loved it too,' said Mr. Barn with gravity. 'We must often go to plays together.'

'But I hate leaving father—it seems so selfish.'

'We'll take him too.'

'It wouldn't be quite the same, would it?'

Mr. Barn was tremendously elated by this.

When they reached the Grammar School, she opened the door and lit the candle on the oak chest, while he paid the taxi-driver. Her face, in the oval of the candle-light, struck him with all its magic of goodness and patience. The beauty of her girlhood was still there, softened by time into the serenity of womanhood; and in a rush of emotion and daring Mr Barn said:

'Do you remember, the notice-board used to be here?'

'Yes, of course it did.' She glanced at the rusted nails on the panelling.

'And here, look here,' he said, running his hand up the side of the door-post, as he had done on the first evening that he returned to the school, 'did you ever notice this?'

'What is that?'

'Hold the candle close.'

'Why,' she said, peering at the blackened post, 'it's M. C., my initials. No, I never noticed them before.'

'I carved them,' said Mr. Barn. 'Twenty-two years ago, to the day. Don't you remember that dance we had in the school-room after the theatricals, the last day of the winter term that year? You danced with me three times. And the next day I carved your initials there! Funny it seems, eh? I suppose you think I was a silly young fool?'

She laughed.

'It's so hard to remember that I was grown up when you were only a boy.'

'Only three years' difference,' he assented. 'It was a good deal then, perhaps. It's nothing now.'

'Yes, I remember that dance,' she said. 'I believe I've got the programme still. I remember printing them on the hectograph quite well.'

'And,' said Mr. Barn, with triumph, 'how I hated Pindrop!'

She turned and went upstairs.

'It all seems ages ago,' she murmured.

Mr. Barn followed her, his mind on fire.

'It seems like yesterday to me,' he said. 'I could have killed Pindrop.'

'Well, there's no need to now,' she replied, turning the corner of the stairs.

'You mean ——?'

He let his hand touch hers as it lay on the banisters.

'He's dead now, poor fellow,' she said. 'Hark, what's that?'

It was Mr. Charnock's voice from above, raised in a high note of anger. They stood still and listened.

'Idiot!' cried the voice, 'Triple idiot! How many times must I tell you that "deserve well *of*" is *de* with the ablative? Now then, "It is certain that Balbus has deserved well *of* me." *Bene meritum esse*—Well, go on, go on: *de me*, of course, blockhead.'

'It sounds like a sentence out of Arnold,' whispered Mr. Barn.

'He thinks he's taking his class again,' she whispered back.

She ran upstairs, the candle-light fluttering on the walls and jerking the shadows of the banisters grotesquely.

Mr. Barn heard the schoolmaster's voice still raised to command the diligence of a class-room of boys.

'Sentence 2. "We have lost considerable time by playing." Have you got that? Now then, "We shall all die some time or other. The best men always die with the most resignation." Now, look alive, boys. Barn, what shall we put for "always"? Be careful. *Semper?* No, idiot, look at your book, note B. "The best men, *optimus quisque*, yes, *moritur* ALIQUANDO—see?—Ah, what's that? Who's that?'—the voice rapped out the questions with a gasp of fear—'Have you come for me? Not yet, I must finish the lesson—"Both you and Balbus are ignorant of many things."—Oh, it's dark and quiet, dark and quiet—I'm not ready yet.'

The voice went on, pleading, irritable, thundering, whining, long after Mary Charnock and Mr. Barn had carried the old gentleman to his bed, and half undressed him. When Mr. Barn went downstairs to fetch the doctor, he could hear the voice still muttering fragments from Arnold's Latin prose composition; and when he followed the doctor upstairs again, he heard his nick-name once more, 'Is there any man that can be compared with Balbus?'

'Here is Balbus, father, come to see you,' said Mary Charnock's quiet voice.

During the hours of waiting, there was a grim undercurrent of humour in the old man's ramblings that was not lost upon the two watchers.

His last intelligible words were:

'I will ask Balbus, whom he is waiting for.'

'Good-morning, sir,' said the shopman. 'Yes, sir, a very fine morning for the time of year. And, if you will excuse me, sir, a

happy new year to you. Can I —— ? Oh, yes, the warehouse. Certainly, sir. Very sad, yes, very sad indeed. . . . But I dare say it was all for the best; yes, sir, he must have been an old man, a very old man. I've often watched them go past together in the evening. . . . I beg your pardon? Oh, any day that's convenient, sir, to Miss Charnock. There need be no formalities, sir; there was no agreement or rent or anything, sir. We shall be glad of the space. The furniture? Oh yes, sir, we can manage that; pack it up and put it in a truck—Quite safe, sir. We always send heavy stuff like that. And—er,' he added, taking a note-book out of his breast pocket. 'What address shall I send them to? Oh yes, sir, we have your address. We sent that statue, did we not?—the Praying Girl. Very good, sir, you may depend on me. It shall go off early next week. Thank you, sir, yes. And,' he said, opening the door politely, 'I take it that you will inform Miss Charnock of the—oh yes, thank you, sir, quite so. Good-morning, sir.'

# *FRANCIS LEDWIDGE.*

BY PROFESSOR LEWIS CHASE
(University of Rochester, State of New York).

If it be true that those whom the gods love die young, how lavishly the divinities are bestowing their affections. Without irony, however, the world believes that young poets who are killed in war are the darlings of the gods. It believes that a certain immortality awaits those who sing sweetly and die nobly before their prime. During the past three years it has taken signal pains to do homage to four soldier-poets in particular, not to mention others less gifted or less known—Rupert Brooke, Charles Sorley, Alan Seeger, and last but not least, the peasant poet of Ireland, 'poor, bird-hearted singer of a day,' Francis Ledwidge, who was killed in action, in Flanders, on July 31, 1917.

Lord Dunsany, poet and patron of poets, discovered Ledwidge in June 1912. He advised him and sponsored his first volume, 'Songs of the Fields,' which appeared in 1915; christening, as well as sponsoring, his second volume 'Songs of Peace,' of 1917. He was strictly Lance-Corporal Ledwidge's 'Captain,' in the Fifth Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. In not immoderate introductions of sincere praise, Lord Dunsany spoke of his protégé's qualities, hailing him as 'the poet of the blackbird'—a highly appropriate epithet; commenting on his 'easy fluency of shapely lines'; predicting that readers will turn to him as to a mirror reflecting beautiful fields, as to a still lake, rather, on a cloudless evening; and rejoicing that Meath and the Boyne and Ireland at large had the peasant poet for whom Lord Dunsany had long been looking, for almost only among the peasants was there 'in daily use a diction worthy of poetry, as well as an imagination capable of dealing with the great and simple things that are a poet's wares. Their thoughts are in the spring time, and all their metaphors fresh.'

Ledwidge contributed to the *Saturday Review* and to the *English Review*, and before his initial volume appeared, as I recall, three poems from it—'A Rainy Day in April,' 'The Wife of Llew,' and 'The Lost Ones'—came out in 'Georgian Poetry, 1913–1915.' It was here I ran across Ledwidge's name, and then, early in 1917,

its editor, Mr. Edward March, sent me a copy of 'Songs of Peace.' I was first struck by a poem which now for many months I have been using in a lecture on form, comparing it in this single respect, with Burns' 'Highland Mary,' and with Mr. A. Hugh Fisher's 'Her Eyes.' It is called 'A Little Boy in the Morning,' and was written about a lad who drove cows regularly past the poet's door, whistling as he went, and who died just before the war.

He will not come, and still I wait.
He whistles at another gate
Where angels listen. Ah, I know
He will not come, yet if I go
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted in the flowery grass?

The moon leans on one silver horn
Above the silhouettes of morn,
And from their nest-sills finches whistle
Or stooping pluck the downy thistle.
How is the morn so gay and fair
Without his whistling in its air?

The world is calling, I must go.
How shall I know he did not pass
Barefooted in the shining grass?

In answer to my queries concerning a lecture upon him in a course in contemporary poetry, Ledwidge, at the front, immediately took up a pad and an indelible pencil, and wrote the following extraordinary letter. It reached me on the last day of June.

It is pure self-revelation to a sympathetic stranger of the most intimate interests of a poet under twenty-five years of age. In it one sees, as in a mirror, not only the landscape of which his work is full, but himself—the war and the possibility of his end, his affection for his kin and for his home, his boyish pranks, his eagerness for study, his modesty towards his past accomplishment, his faith in his future. As, still stunned by the news of his death, I look upon his delicate handwriting, there seems to me to have passed from the earth a very rare and precious spirit. Lord Dunsany prophesied better than he knew when he said that all of Francis Ledwidge's future books 'lie on the knees of the gods.'

'B.E.F., France.
June 6, 1917.

'Professor Lewis Chase.

'DEAR SIR,—Your letter of May 15th reached me this afternoon. I have to thank you for introducing my books into your University library and for the interest which you take in my poems and will endeavour to supply you with what details you require of myself and my work for the composition of your proposed lecture. You will, of course, understand that I am writing this under the most inept circumstances between my watches, for I am in the firing line and may be busy at any moment in the horrible work of war.

'I am on active service since the spring of 1915, having served in the Dardanelles and the First British Expeditionary Force to Serbia, and after a brief interval at home came to France in December 1916. Some of the people who know me least imagine that I joined the Army because I knew men were struggling for higher ideals and great empires, and I could not sit idle to watch them make for me a more beautiful world. They are mistaken. I joined the British Army because she stood between Ireland and an enemy common to our civilization, and I would not have her say that she defended us while we did nothing at home but pass resolutions. I am sorry that Party Politics should ever divide our own tents but am not without hope that a new Ireland will arise from her ashes in the ruins of Dublin, like the Phœnix, with one purpose, one aim, and one ambition. I tell you this in order that you may know what it is to me to be called a British soldier, while my own country has no place amongst the nations but the place of Cinderella.

'I am of a family who were ever soldiers and poets. In the eleventh century when the Danes invaded Ireland many of the soldiers settled in the land and became more Irish than the Irish themselves. Amongst these was the first of my ancestors. I have heard my mother say many times that the Ledwidges were once a great people in the land, and she has shown me with a sweep of her hand green hills and wide valleys where sheep are folded which still bear the marks of dead industry and, once, this was all ours.

'These stories, told at my mother's doorstep in the owl's light, are the first things I remember except, perhaps, the old songs which she sang to me, so full of romance, love and sacrifice. She taught me to listen and appreciate the blackbird's song, and when I grew to love it beyond all others she said it was because I was born

in a blackbird's nest and had its blood in my veins. My father died when I was two.

'There were four brothers of us and three sisters. I am the second youngest. For these my mother laboured night and day, as none of us were strong enough to provide for our own wants. She never complained and even when my eldest brother advanced in strength she persisted in his regular attendance at school until he qualified at bookkeeping and left home for Dublin. This position carried a respectable salary, but one day he returned unwell and finally died, after a long struggle, on June 10, 1901.

'One by one my other brothers and sisters left school for the world until there were only left myself and my youngest brother and mother. I was seven years of age when my eldest brother died, and though I had only been to school on occasional days I was able to read the tomb-stones in a neighbouring grave-yard and had written in secret several verses which still survive. About this time I was one day punished in school for crying and that punishment ever afterwards haunted the master like an evil dream, for I was only crying over Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," which an advanced class had been reading aloud.

'It was in this same class that I wrote my first poem, in order to win for the school a half holiday. It was on a Shrove Tuesday and the usual custom of granting the half holiday had not been announced at play time, so when the master was at his lunch I crept quietly into the school and wrote on a slate a verse to remind him, leaving it on his desk where he must see it. I remember it yet:

> 'Our master is too old for sweet,
> Too old for children's play,
> Like Æsop's dog, that he can't eat,
> No other people may.

'This alluded to the pancakes that are always made on Shrove Tuesday and are a great treat in rural Ireland. The silly verse accomplished its end. Years afterwards he often spoke to me of that verse and wished he had the slate to present to some one who liked the story and my poetry.

'There was a literary society for juveniles run thro' the pages of a Dublin weekly, and I soon became a member of this. In all the competitions for which I entered I carried off the prize, and soon had a decent library of the books which interest children. Odd halfpennies which I got for some message run from the neighbours accumulated in time to half-crowns which in their turns were exchanged for 'The Arabian Nights," "Robinson Crusoe," 'Don Quixote," and the poems of Keats and Longfellow. My

admiration for Longfellow began early and I could recite passages from "The Golden Legend" at eight years. I loved the series of metaphors in "Hiawatha," beginning:

"Fiercely the red sun descending
Burned his way along the mountains, etc."

but thought nothing in the world as wonderful as Shakespeare's fairy song:

"Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are corals made, etc."

'While I was still at school many silly verses left my pen, written either for my own amusement or the amusement of my companions. Indeed I left many an exercise unfinished worrying over some thought that shaped itself into rhyme.

'I have always been very quiet and bashful and a great mystery in my own place. I avoided the evening play of neighbouring children to find some secret place in a wood by the Boyne and there imagine fairy dances and hunts, fires and feasts. I saw curious shapes in shadows and clouds and loved to watch the change of the leaves and the flowers. I heard voices in the rain and the wind and strange whisperings in the waters. I loved all wandering people and things, and several times tried to become part of a gipsy caravan. I read of Troy and Nineveh, and the nomads of the East, and the mystery of Sahara. I wrote wander songs for the cuckoos and winter songs for the robin. I hated gardens where gaudy flowers were trained in rows but loved the wild things and the free, the things of change and circumstance. Meanwhile the years were coming over me with their wisdom, and I began to realize that men cannot live by dreams. I had no more to learn in National School at fourteen so I strapped up my books and laid them away with the cobwebs and the dust. My mother apprenticed me to a Dublin grocer and sent me off one Spring morning with many tears and blessings and nothing of anything else. I could not bear brick horizons, and all my dreams were calling me home. It was there I wrote "Behind the Closed Eye"[1]:

'"I walk the old frequented ways
That wind around the tangled braes,
I live again the sunny days
Ere I the city knew.

[1] All of Ledwidge's poems referred to or inserted in this letter, except 'Pan,' which is now first published, may be found in one of his two volumes

And scenes of old again are born,
The woodbine lassoing the thorn,
And drooping Ruth-like in the corn
The poppies weep the dew.

Above me in their hundred schools
The magpies bend their young to rules,
And like an apron full of jewels
The dewy cobweb swings.

And frisking in the stream below
The troutlets make the circles flow,
And the hungry crane doth watch them grow
As a smoker does his rings.

Above me smokes the little town,
With its whitewashed walls and roofs of brown
And its octagon spire toned smoothly down
As the holy minds within.

And wondrous impudently sweet,
Half of him passion, half conceit,
The blackbird calls adown the street
Like the piper of Hamelin.

I hear him, and I feel the lure
Drawing me back to the homely moor,
I'll go and close the mountain's door
On the city's strife and din,"

and scarcely was the last line written when I stole out through a back door, and set my face for home. I arrived home at six A.M., dusty and hungry after a weary thirty mile walk. I determined never to leave home again, so I took up any old job at all with the local farmers and was happy.

'I set myself certain studies and these I pursued at night when I should be resting from a laborious day. I took a certificate of one hundred and twenty words a minute at Pitman's shorthand, and soon knew Euclid as well as a man of Trinity College. I read books on logic and astronomy, and could point out the Planets and discuss on the nebulæ of the Milky Way.

'I read and studied the poets of England from the age of Chaucer to Swinburne, turning especially to the Elizabethans

and the ballads that came before the great Renaissance. I thirsted for travel and adventure, and longed to see the Italy of Shelley and the Greece of Byron. But the poems of Keats and his sad life appealed to me most.

'I began to pick faults with Longfellow and Tennyson, and the poems of the former which had erstwhile pleased me seemed too full of colour, too full of metaphor and often too disconnected, like a picture which an artist began at one window and finished at another. Tennyson was too conventional for my taste and nearly always spoiled his work with a prologue or an epilogue full of loud bombast or conceit. Shelley was innocent of such sins and poor Keats never heard of them.

'For a long time I did little but criticise and re-arrange my books, separating, as it were, the sheep from the goats. I put Longfellow and Tennyson at the back of the shelf, and gave Keats, Swinburne, Shelley and the anthologies the foremost place in the light. I burned many copybooks which contained fugitive pieces of my own because I thought it were better for them to die young and be happy than live to be reviled.

'"Georgian Poetry" (with my three excluded) contains, I think, the best poems of the century. What could be sweeter than the Songs at the "Gates of Damascus" (J. E. Flecker's), or Stephens' "Great Paths"?

'Of myself, I am a fast writer and very prolific. I have long silences, often for weeks, then the mood comes over me, and I must write and write no matter where I be or what the circumstances are. I do my best work in spring. I have had many disappointments in life and many sorrows, but in my saddest moment song came to me and I sang. I get more pleasure from a good line than from a big cheque. Though I love music I cannot write within earshot of any instrument. I cannot carry a watch on account of the tick, real or imaginary, and might as well try to sleep under the Bell of Bruges as in a room where a clock stands. I write a lot late at night in my rooms, though mostly my poems are written out of doors.

'I have written many short stories and one play which is declared a success by eminent playwrights who have read it.

'"Rainy Day in April" was written when I was once temporarily away from home. It was inspired by home-sickness and a drenching which I got on a bicycle:

'"When the clouds shake their hyssops, and the rain
Like holy water falls upon the plain,
'Tis sweet to gaze upon the springing grain
And see your harvest born.

And sweet the little breeze of melody
The blackbird puffs upon the budding tree,
While the wild poppy lights upon the lea
And blazes 'mid the corn.

The skylark soars the freshening shower to hail,
And the meek daisy holds aloft her pail,
And Spring all radiant by the wayside pale
Sets up her rock and reel.

See how she weaves her mantle fold on fold,
Hemming the woods and carpeting the wold.
Her warp is of the green, her woof the gold,
The spinning world her wheel."

'"The Wife of Llew" was written in a meadow full of flowers and singing birds:

'"And Gwydion said to Math, when it was Spring:
'Come now and let us make a wife for Llew.'
And so they broke broad boughs yet moist with dew,
And in a shadow made a magic ring:
They took the violet and the meadow-sweet
To form her pretty face, and for her feet
They built a mound of daisies on a wing,
And for her voice they made a linnet sing
In the wide poppy blowing for her mouth.
And over all they chanted twenty hours.
And Llew came singing from the azure south
And bore away his wife of birds and flowers."

'"The Lost Ones" was written in a sad mood when I remembered all whom I knew and who were lost and away for ever. I wanted some one to console me by assuring me that beyond the dark, they would meet me again:

'"Somewhere is music from the linnets' bills,
And thro' the sunny flowers the bee-wings drone,
And white bells of convolvulus on hills
Of quiet May make silent ringing, blown
Hither and thither by the wind of showers,
And somewhere all the wandering birds have flown;
And the brown breath of Autumn chills the flowers.
But where are all the loves of long ago?

O little twilight ship blown up the tide,
Where are the faces laughing in the glow
Of morning years, the lost ones scattered wide?
Give me your hand, O brother, let us go
Crying about the dark for those who died."

'My favourites amongst my own are always changing. Of those published I, perhaps, like "Thomas McDonagh" best:

'"He shall not hear the bittern cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud March blows
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,
Blowing to flame the golden cup
Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the Dark Cow leaves the moor,
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads."

'Better work than any you have yet seen from me is being selected for my next book, but my best is not yet written. I mean to do something really great if I am spared, but out here one may at any moment be hurled beyond Life.

'Here is a little recent thing—"Pan":

'"He knows the safe ways and unsafe,
And he will lead the lambs to fold,
Gathering them with his little pipe,
The gentle and the overbold.

He counts them over one by one
And leads them back by rock and steep
To grassy hills where dawn is wide
And they may run and skip and leap.

And just because he loves the lambs
He settles them for rest at noon,
And plays them on his oaten pipe
A wonder of a little tune."

'Best wishes and thanks.

'Yours very sincerely,
'FRANCIS LEDWIDGE.'

## *BUKARA ISLAND.*

SHORTLY after the fall of Tabora and the expulsion of the Hun from the northern portion of German East Africa, I was ordered to Ukerewe Island, some thirty miles from Mwanza in the south-east corner of Victoria Nyanza, to investigate a report of an outbreak of plague, which, however, fortunately proved to be a false alarm. From Ukerewe a visit was paid to the neighbouring island of Bukara, which lies some few miles off to the north-east. This visit yielded some astounding revelations of primitive ingenuity in the handling and adjustment of a problem of survival which may interest people at home, confronted as they are to-day by somewhat analogous conditions. Through the kindness of one of the fathers of the Ukerewe Père Blanc Mission, I was able to amplify and confirm the accuracy of the notes made during my two days' stay on the island.

Bukara Island comprises roughly some 36 square miles of territory, a considerable portion of which is bare granite, and maintains a population of 19,000 souls. It is practically self-supporting. Without any particular natural richness or fertility, the island consists of a number of low rocky kopjes crowning undulating stretches of a light loamy soil, with hardly a tree of respectable size to be seen anywhere—the sun beating down unmercifully throughout the day upon its shadeless slopes. Bukara is exposed to the full force of the storms which rage round this corner of the lake, the Mwanza district being distinguished by its heavy rainfall. Denudation works havoc with its exposed fields, and the frequent deeply-hewn water-courses, dry at the time of my visit, testify to the volumes of water which sweep down from the exposed kopjes during the rains.

Here we have a state of over-population, of isolation, and of independence which seems almost incredible. And all adjusted by unaided native administration, an automatic adaptation to a peculiar and increasingly complex environment, which may well serve as an object-lesson to England and the Allies to-day.

We read of efforts to make Britain self-supporting, of scientific agriculture with a view to utilising to the full every waste and by-product, of differentiation and co-ordination of labour, and of rigid economy in everything by everybody. On Bukara they

'got there' long years ago, and have been at it ever since. Nothing is wasted on this wonderful island. Apart from bare rocks and sandy watercourses, the whole area is utilised either for village sites, agricultural plots, or grazing-grounds. The plots measure approximately 80 to 100 yards by 30 to 40 yards in area, and are marked off by granite boundary stones, trees, or bushes. Some of the stones have, in the course of time, sunk out of sight beneath the surface of the soil, but their whereabouts is known to all concerned. These plots are owned by the natives, and are inherited at death by the eldest son. They can be sold at the owner's will, and the rights of ownership are most rigidly observed. A man may possess several plots: the chief of the island has thirty.

Live-stock and hoes are the principal articles of barter. A wife costs anything from a couple of bulls, ten goats, and a hoe or two, to a single hoe, which in hard cash represents about twenty cents or 3½*d*. For some obscure reason marriageable ladies command a much better price in the eastern half of the island than in the western part, where an outlay of two new hoes will ensure the pick of the market. The value of a goat is roughly three rupees, of a sheep two rupees to two rupees fifty cents. Utility holds precedence over physical beauty in the Bukara scale of values.

Trees and shrubs of any size exceeding mere undergrowth are valued over and above the plot on which they stand, and a purchaser of a tree-containing plot may refuse or be unable to buy the tree, which then remains the property of the vendor. In the case of an owner who has once refused to include the trees in the sale of a plot and who subsequently changes his mind, etiquette dictates that he must give the purchaser of the plot the first refusal. For a tree, if properly exploited, is a priceless possession. The leaves are plucked with infinite care and taken home in the evening to feed the cattle and goats. The sticks and branches go to help build the huts, the bark being previously carefully peeled off and put aside to dry to be used as fuel or cord. Dead sticks are of course invaluable for fuel—even an Epping picnicker knows that. When occasion necessitates the lopping off of a large branch or the felling of a tree, shoots are carefully stuck in the soil to reproduce, in due time, yet other trees. Dead leaves also belong to the owner of the tree; a man must not steal his neighbour's leaves nor his sticks nor his rubbish on pain of being brought before the chief and heavily fined. Even in this unexpected quarter the ruling passion of subdivision and allotment finds expression, and a father will

divide up a tree among his children, apportioning so many branches to each with leaves and all the other appurtenances dead and alive.

The *matama* plots are carefully tended, and all weeds are kept and carried off in baskets at the day's end as food for the animals. When the shoots are six to eight inches high the plot will be carefully inspected, and, where too thickly set, some plants will be solemnly uprooted and transplanted to a thinner patch.

The cultivation is done with wooden hoes with long blades like huge birds' beaks. The wood for these hoes and for the canoes is generally fetched from the forests on Ukerewe, where there is an abundance of everything and a free-trade régime. The main foot-tracks are marked off jealously by stone walls where they cross the cultivated areas. Even the banks of the few narrow permanent streams are marked out into allotments, and either planted or used for grazing purposes.

All goats and cattle must wear little plaited grass muzzles when walking to and from their legitimate grazing-grounds; and woe betide the owner if a muzzle slips off *en route* and the goat nibbles someone else's *matama*! The chief's live-stock are, however, exempt from this indignity. The appearance of the animals with these little baskets tied on their noses strikes the unaccustomed eye as supremely ridiculous. They look thoroughly disgusted and withal so helpless, and seem unable to do anything properly and with dignity with their faces so hampered. It leads, moreover, to a lot of protest, especially from the goats; and if anything arrests their progress to and from the grazing-patch an indignant chorus of bleats proclaims their disapproval. The dung of all domestic animals is most carefully collected and deposited in little heaps about the plots, to be subsequently dug into the soil; the natives even adopt the Chinese system of manuring on a small scale.

The stalks of the *matama* plants are collected at the harvest, after the ears have been removed, and done up into small bundles, which are stacked in cones on large steep-sided rocks on the kopjes. The owner climbs the rock, when occasion demands, by means of a log which he props up and uses as a rough ladder. These *matama* stacks are conspicuous objects in a Bukara landscape, standing out on the great granite rocks like survey-beacons. Each component bundle is valued at ten cents; the stalks are used in roof-building or as fuel.

As mentioned above, certain parts of the island are reserved

for grazing purposes, over and above the small corners preserved by individuals among their private plots. There are two big stretches of pasturage, when I saw them for all the world like the well-kept 'pretty' of some sea side golf-links at home before the war. Both these grass tracts, covering several square miles, are sub-divided, the different villages each having a plot allotted to them. This applies only to the full-grown grass which is used for thatching purposes, and not to grazing rights once the 'hay' has been removed. If an owner wishes to preserve his grass from the cattle he must outline his patch by twigs stuck in the ground, removing them once he has cut his crop.

The chief of the island exercises an arbitrary right over these grass areas, and the heads of villages do the same with their village plots. On the kopjes, wherever there is the slightest possibility of grass surviving, the loose stones are picked off and built into little walls around the patch, serving both to check the loss of soil and for definition. The grass, when full-grown, is never burnt in the dry season as is done invariably by natives elsewhere, but is reaped as carefully as a wheat crop at home, and stored for thatching. It belongs to the chief, who doles it out to his subjects as required, sometimes on payment of a little *matama*, sometimes 'burre.'

In Central Africa there is no such thing as hay in the sense of fodder for live-stock; domestic stock and game alike avoid the full-grown grass as too rank for food and make for the younger growth—the green shoots after the fires of the hot season being especially appreciated, although apt to upset the digestion of the cattle. One often sees miles and miles of waving grass-tops, reminiscent, barring the absence of hedges, of a big English hay-field ready for cutting, but in reality of little use for grazing purposes, while any patches of recently burnt ground in the neighbourhood will be covered with game tracks.

The grazing rights on these pasture areas belong to the chief, who allows the natives to bring their cattle along from time to time on payment of *matama*. His own animals, are, of course, allowed free scope.

Against the inundation and denudation following the terrific storms which sweep over the island in the rainy season, all sorts of ingenious devices exist in the shape of artificial channels and embankments to check the loss of soil by rain-wash. On the slopes beneath the kopjes plots are banked up below by stout

stone walls which, by their support, allow of a considerable depth of soil resisting the action of the water. In the more exposed parts of the island, intersected in every direction by ragged rain channels which testify to the volume and power of the water, are little embankments placed here and there with infinite labour and cunning, defending forlorn-looking patches of *matama*, secure for a season at any rate—green oases in a desert of water-scored barrenness. Along the bed of one of the few permanent water-courses is a deposit of clay which enables the natives to make their own pipes, though not extensive enough to meet the demand for cooking-pots, which are bought on Ukerewe or on the mainland some fifteen miles off.

The Bukara hut differs slightly from those seen on the neighbouring islands and the mainland in possessing a very pointed roof; one-half of the hut is devoted to the live-stock and the other to the human occupants. The inhabitants of neighbouring huts, which are grouped in little villages, combine to assist each other when any special task arises such as building a hut or finishing off a bit of hoeing before the rains come along.

In the old days, before the appointment of a single supreme chief, the island was the scene of ceaseless petty feuds. The natives possess as arms bows and poisoned arrows and a kind of spear which consists of a long wooden shaft pointed at one end but not fired—a simple but effective weapon.

The women are uniformly ugly—nay, hideous from a European standpoint—though doubtless they meet the local requirements. At any rate, they produce enormous numbers of children. They wear a quantity of brass wire coiled round their arms and legs, and sundry bits of wood and shells are hung round their necks. Their wardrobe is limited to goat- and sheepskins in various stages of filth and decay. The men wear a minute flap of skin tucked fore and aft through a belt of rings made of plaited grass stems—a mere fig-leaf of a garment. The natives on the whole present a dirty and unkempt appearance, in spite of the close proximity of the lake; many suffer from various stages of elephantiasis. The wooden mortars to be seen on Ukerewe and the neighbouring mainland for grinding grain are practically non-existent on Bukara, where all grain is placed on flat rock surfaces and ground by hand by the housewife with a small stone.

Of the folklore space will not allow anything here. One of their customs is, however, significant—twins are unpopular, whereas

triplets are looked upon as a veritable curse. On the birth of twins the medicine-man is called in, not for the *accouchement* but to drive away the evil spirit responsible for this catastrophe. Two large clay water-pots are procured and a few green banana leaves are placed in one of them. The little intruders are then deposited inside, and the mouth is covered by the second pot. The father then carries them off at night to a certain clump of trees on one of the grazing areas, and there leaves the pot with its living contents, surrounded by scores of other similar sarcophagi, some left intact, others smashed and revealing the bleached bones of tiny martyrs gone before. The same procedure is followed with babies born feet first—a presentation almost universally regarded by the natives of these parts of Africa as a bad business requiring drastic measures. After the disposal of the infants the practitioner prepares the 'dawa' necessary for the purification of the mother, who is not considered free from the bad spirit's influence until she has vindicated her reputation by giving birth to a normally-placed single child.

But I have, in all conscience, trespassed enough upon the reader's time and patience. Bukara is working out her destiny confronted with problems of 'grave national importance,' which she is tackling in a manner that commands our admiration. Of late years Europeans have stepped into the arena, and one of the signs of their influence is the appointment of a single supreme chief to whom natives of all parts of the island can refer their minor disputes. The future is a bit more rosy for twins, triplets, and the like. Doubtless some kind of emigration to Ukerewe or the mainland will be necessary in the future. Meantime, the economy, industry, and independence, which their insular environment has developed in these uncivilised and primarily improvident folk, might well serve as a lesson and example to some of the *laissez-faire* optimists of another island, many thousand miles away across the sea.

H. Lyndhurst Duke.

# *THOSE DAYS.*

## CHAPTER I.

'So strong is the childlike spirit in these comedies that I believe they were meant for children to interpret.'—*The Theatre of Max Reinhardt.*

BELOW down the hill roars the world. Above, the houses are impenetrable, for the lights are not yet lit, and it is cold. They ooze sadly, and the sooty laburnums drip. The sky is sullen and as dark as astronomy allows. And a little way off unseen footsteps die away and take a long time to do it.

There is a certain air of cold gloom in autumn in the London suburbs that is suitable to Strong Drama. It was the dead time before tea. The road was ugly and harsh and fog filled it, even at the top of the hill, and though the road, like all roads that you live in, brought a sense of security, with an under sense of shuttered warmth, the fog made all beyond it doubtful.

At the corner by the letter-box was a wide open space where the Avenue and the Road joined, and you turned round into the Hill, having on your left the row of little low Hill Villas, with their little low railings. If you turned right-handed you would look to-night into a pool of fog, from which peered, fifty yards down the Hill, the sweaty lintel of a public-house.

Bobby Little, a small boy, strode up the Avenue cheered with the thought of tea, and suiting his pace to his father's, which made it an interrupted stilt-walk. Inwardly he was a mixture of youthful glow and boredom, for he hated walks—outwardly, the October chill cooled him, and his eye followed the pavement cracks, mossy some of them, and already familiar to him. The rest of the family followed, listening to a story which the smallest girl was relating about one of Mr. Carter Paterson's horses, and unconscious of doom.

For there was a row on at the corner, and you became aware of it as you reached 'Bon Air,' where the collie-dog lived. People stood about in the road and on the pavement by the church. In the half-light figures moved, and it was quite impossible to under-

stand what was happening. But there was shouting and a smell of danger, and suddenly it got about that 'The Boys are throwing stones.'

It is a custom of the theatre people to play upon the sensibilities of the audience, and tune them to horror, by the means of lighting. The scene being set, this now happened to the Little family, for the sky grew from the colour of fat bacon to that of liver, and a sense of blue prevailed in the consciousness—not a nice blue, but the angular granite blue which steam-rollers crunch, and roads are made with.

Mr. Little instantly shouted orders, and disappeared into the vortex, with that annoyance and strong desire to bring them to justice which distinguishes the householder. Herbert, fiercely moved, took Helen in search of a policeman, for the attack, though local, was in the nature of a break through between two beats. God knows the cause. Perhaps the nasty weather. Perhaps the passion for organised violence that lies underneath the smooth faces of boys. The affair seemed to have reached its height and to be moving south-south-west towards its native slum. Someone's umbrella, or someone, had been hit, but the corner sprinkled with stones was almost clear, and it was from his own garden gate that Bobby Little, with tightened heart-strings, watched the finish of the piece, as people scattered homeward with the story on their lips and danger seemed to increase with the night and with the distance.

It was a worthy finish.

First a policeman, instinct with leisurely determination, and beating his woollen gloves together, passed down the road, speaking to nobody. Probably he had counted the cost when he enlisted.

And last, while he was scruffing boys and man-handling them, hauling them off in a tail of riff-raff and clapping them into jail, Mr. Little, Bobby's own papa, staggered home, with his hand at his head, blood upon his face and on his knuckles, and would say no word to anybody, but must go to bed.

The next morning, however, things had resumed their ordinary aspect. Only a telegram must be sent to Mr. Bollard, and hoops were left behind under the circumstances as impeding flight. The post-office did not seem at all excited over the affair, and at the fishmonger's (as headaches must not have meat) Mr. Ling's forearms looked as sodden as usual, and his goldfish panted with the same exhaustion. Helen recited on the way home the enormous difficulty

there was in finding a policeman when wanted, and in persuading him that it is life and death. 'I told him it was life and death,' she said, flinging back her hair. And Bobby and Alice, who carried the fish, wondered with bated breath if he had scruffed the Nasty Boy. This was a demon who haunted those parts, and whose habit was, when he met with clean children, to grasp their caps and fling them on to the top of tall gate pillars, smiling. Bobby, and even Herbert, had suffered this way, and knew to their sorrow that it was no police affair, but a combat *à deux*, a psychical, not physical, duel. The smile told them that.

. . . . . .

There was a dinner party at the Littles' house and the children were in bed. How the best of mammas must adore the hours when the children are in bed, and she can throw off care, and talk to grown-up people and 'see a little of me'! Only the maid will come in at that moment and say 'Please,'m, cook's cut 'er 'and with a chopper an' fainted.'

The hare had come home in a bass bag from the Farringdon market. The leg of mutton, pale with flour like a pierrot, had been hung in its steel box and converted into a voluptuous mass of reeking juices. Pies in little pannikins had been shut into the oven with an Æschylean clang, and the pots and rings and dampers manipulated a dozen times with the haste that a roasting fire imposes on human fabric—otherwise scorching.

Bobby Little had helped clean the épergne, smearing it pink, after wetting the block by a method of his own. Bobby Little accompanied papa with the key and a candle to the cellar to get a bottle of wine, and in the cramped maze of unhealthy trunks, bunches of old keys, baskets and matting, had made certain that two of his possessions were still alive—a tall golden hock bottle and its half-sized offspring. And then he had gone to bed alone, in the dark.

The visitors arrived with a jingling up of cabs, a halt with all four feet, and a jingling slowly away after the flap had flapped. A slight burst of noise as the hall was crossed, and the drawing-room door opened, and then a hush as it closed. Finally a tremendous noise like the meat coming into the lion-house, and then Herbert sent the little ones back to bed.

The children had never hoped that Sam Smailes and Professor Aitchison Murchison would ever both come to dinner at the same

time. But it happened, like the conjunction of Venus, and precluded sleep. For Sam Smailes and the Professor had a point in common, that their laughter was loud, but while Sam's was merely deep and tickle o' the sere, the Professor's was so colossal as to penetrate in gusts to the bottom of a bed two floors up. Professor Aitchison Murchison used to come suddenly, no one knew whence, or why, and at the oddest times, like an erratic boulder. Nothing else of him ever came to be known or to be talked about except his beard, which was less an ornament than a growth, and made kissing fearful.

Sam Smailes on the other hand was nice. He acted, and his hair stood up straight, as though he lived on a trap-door which was a little open and through which blew a perpetual north wind. This, with mobile eyebrows and a hollow cheek lent a singular air of surprise to his pear-shaped face. And he spoke in a hollow voice that called up skeletons. He had a broad humour, as children love it, which his voice caressed as an organ caresses a cathedral roof, or as a trowel caresses wet plaster. When the little Alice had told him about the boys and the stone, and how she had thought it was still inside the bruise, he had tossed lugubrious eyes to Heaven and said—

'O dear, dear, dear, dear,
O the shocking young varmint!'

and the little Alice had laughed.

No feeling is more delicious than that of standing in your night-shirt on cold paint, leaning over banisters that creak, and waiting with a thumping heart for something to happen that you are not supposed to see. If you were caught——!

On dinner party nights Herbert and Helen watched in this wise bald heads arriving and grey heads with combs, and studied the beauty of the foreshortened human frame—watched them arrive, and sometimes watched them go. Watched trays come up from the nether depths and smoking dishes carried in and cast out again on the dumb waiter. Sometimes with the connivance of a shameless hussy they would descend and eat flying. Sometimes they would go back to bed for a refresher course in warmth, and return again to consider for long silent intervals the old story of the moth and the lamp, or the noise that gas makes when everybody is eating. Once when a visitor was going away papa looked up——!

## CHAPTER II.

'Bien souvent je ne pense à rien comme une bête,
Soudain un mot bourdonne et passe dans ma tête,
Mot jadis entendu.
Un de ces mots de rien où vivait tout ton être,
Et je sens mille échos de mon passé renaître,
Dans cet écho perdu.

Je me souviens de l'an, du mois, du jour, de l'heure,
Et je me ferme les yeux, sans rien dire, et je pleure,
Car dans ce mot en l'air
J'entends toutes les voix de ma jeunesse heureuse,
Comme on entend au fond d'une coquille creuse
Chanter toute la mer.'

At the earliest walking period of Bobby Little's existence, when summer was still a phenomenon which he had enjoyed but which he had no particular reason to think would ever recur, his sphere of activity was confined to 'Up and Down.' Towards the outer world his attitude at this time was one of observation, of, shall we say, æsthetico-scientific rumination, rather than of any marked sympathy, though science as he erected it was far other than that taught in Universities, being indeed his own invention.

It was only gradually that his brothers and sisters emerged from being a noise, or a pair of helping hands and a smile, into companions, deadly enemies, or examples. People who passed him in the street were scenery, stage attributes, furniture, a frieze or patterns of shapes now comic, now fearful, ranging from total unintelligibility to ecstatic familiarity. The few who entered the house and invaded drawing-room hours entered by virtue only of unsuspected attributes. One man long remained in his memory as a watch-chain, and an unpleasant smell of bird's-eye tobacco, and he much preferred the company of the fender-stool and the smell of the drawing-room shutters.

'Up and Down' was the slight curve of the Hill Villas from the corner by the letter-box where the row was to the corner where respectability stopped and the close smell of poverty began. On the side opposite the shaded villas was the green bank of a waterworks, behind angular wooden palings, tarred, and wide enough apart to make it worth while running a hoop stick along. This was the sunny side, and here, on sparkling mornings of hard frost,

Bobby would take his hoop all alone, the blue and red hoop that he pushed with a handle, not beat, and push it thoughtfully along. There was crackling ice in the puddle holes, like cold mutton gravy, and black ice in the gutters of the forsaken thoroughfare. The sun sat a red eye in the brown air, and nothing mattered. What could matter? The others were up the road sliding. The road stretched beyond thought on either side. The ice sparkled. Soot filled the nostrils fragrantly. There was the house and here were the palings to anchor identity to. You could not be lost but could allow leisure for your hoop and for the curious outer world that crossed your path, sights and sounds and smells, dogs, beetles—it is wonderful how many beetles there are in the world and what outsizes: one crossed my page this morning no bigger than a pin's head, but corpulent—leaves, stones, people. Or suddenly Bobby Little would pause, for no known reason, and realise self, detached in the minutest setting and eternal, in a light that would never fade. And then the gate would creak and mamma said 'Come along, you little rogue,' and he went along with his muffler all wet with breath.

How gates creak and scream! Or shut with a hollow thud as melancholy as laurel groves, or open with one click that means the post and another that means the dustman. There was a time when I could have told with my eyes shut whose gate was opening all down the street. And the sound, even now, calls up a vision of dapper maids tripping to the post after dusk with the dog and flying apron strings, or peering out along the privet hedges as the lamplighter clicks his magic rod against the by-pass—I love that symbol of orderly decorum, of modest brightness, the trim maid. And they never used to want exercise or outdoor delectations in those days.

That winter Bobby went to his first play, 'Cinderella,' and saw more people and a larger curtain than he had ever dreamed of in his worst nightmares; only this one was hot and smelled. They *could* raise the curtain however, as was alleged, and when it had disappeared unnaturally into the roof, and the people had been put out till they looked no more than flower beds in the dark, his senses were thunderstruck by strange architecture and a beautiful and phenomenal mixture of days, seasons, and climes. Of the drama itself, as enacted, he was hopelessly un-apprehensive. The Prince, the ugly sisters, Cinderella herself were not people he knew, though Cinderella was a person obviously and had a pretty smile and

bright golden hair. Her father he liked much better. He had been shopping with an umbrella, and brought it back full of parcels for his child, because she could not go to the ball. And that, Bobby thought, was uncommonly kind. What pleased him most, however, was when the fireplace, where the ashes were, became a rosy red cavern, and a witch came down, and everything disappeared except frogs and a pumpkin drawn by mice. That was a solemn scene, and belonged entirely to wonder. And so did the court of Fairyland, all sparkling white with swansdown and ostrich feathers and diamond garters. And when the whole thing had lasted longer than seemed probable there were transformation scenes with gauze, and a harlequinade. They are dead now.

But, on the whole, drama does not reside in the theatre, that plush palpitation of dim figures and beautiful, if unintelligible, sights and lights. The extravagance (in a monetary sense) is for one thing distracting—all those gold trumpets for instance. But outside in the streets, in the buses where all the people keep nodding : In the courage and ability which can guide itself through such miles of clashing novelty and danger : In the great mild-eyed horses of a genus unknown to the suburbs, better than the Zoo, and with feet that could paw holes in the road. And in the wickedness of men.

For as Bobby was threading or being purposefully hauled along those narrow alleys by which Drury Lane used to be approached from Holborn in the region of Booksellers' Row, a boy, errand bound, and nonchalantly passing a fruiterer's stall built up deep into the wall with oranges, assumed one with such assurance, such swift tact and *savoir-faire*, that it was horrible and beautiful, for the boldness and art of crime all must adore.

When Bobby got home and was being put to bed, a fact emerged to which nobody paid any attention at all. A young lady had figured in the pantomime as valet to the Prince Dandino, with an elegant tournure of limbs and a dashing grey doublet. Possibly, too, she had a feather in her cap, apart from that one of having formed for one spectator at least the excitement of the afternoon. Probably she died without ever having known of it. Possibly, alone in the theatre Bobby believed her to be a man. But what he believed and what he conjectured who shall say? To his question 'What's a valley?' no answer was thought to be necessary —the context being cold.

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It was Sunday. It was dark. Even in the drawing-room it was dark, in spite of a warm fire, and a lamp that looked like a hot orange. For it was Sunday, and the day had been full of Bibles. The shutters were shut, tight and hard, and the bar barred. The long, long curtains drawn over them with clicks from the black rings. And between the shutters and the curtains was that thin mousey passage where a small boy could slide along unseen, or listen and peer out like a desperado behind the arras. The door was shut on a bare hall with its flickering gas-light, on the shadows and creaking suspense of lonely bedrooms, and the desperate silent gloom of downstairs, where cold cats fought noiseless engagements with the blackbeetles in front of a dying fire.

On Sunday dark passages and empty rooms at night-tide are worse than on Monday. All the holiness is collected in the drawing-room, and God is not far off. As long as you are there, you are safe, and are good. Outside I would not answer for it, for the servants are out.

Before the children go to bed, there are hymns. The lamp is put on the piano where already papa is sitting, playing dreamily a hymn-tune of his own invention and miles away in sorrowful contemplation of his own youth. After a hunt for tune-books in the chest, one is found. The Old Hundredth is opened at, and the family gathers round and with no thought of music, but in all good faith, and with a piety and proper pride which it were better had never died out in the land—sings. As the thorax of the very young is not considered tuneful, Bobby only held a watching brief in these murder cases. By special request he stood on the back of the sofa, near the lamp globe, and studied the wall-paper, which he admired—a flower pattern with gold in it.

He disliked hymns.

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There is a moment in the journey of the traveller through life, when he has just waved from the carriage window, or just stepped off the steamer, or just reached his friend's house. And nothing is expected from him, because he must be tired. A hearty welcome is then given to him, for fresh faces are always pleasant, and who knows if he has not some foreign delicacies in his bag? He is lapped in rugs. Strange country flies past the window. A crunch of gravel, a cool fresh air, and the doors fly open. The light streams out. Footmen and handmaidens are at his shoulder, and dogs fawn. His host is very much his servant, and through

a caressing atmosphere of welcome and warmth, of novelty and luxury, he proceeds to his soft carpeted room, and his fire and his bath. Then is the time to yawn and feel deliciously tired and rich and clever. To-morrow you will be able to look round you. To-night is your moment, and it will never come again.

I like to think of a child guest-wise, like this, coming from overseas into the circle of his mother's smiles and the faithful service of ready retainers. They will be good to him, until at least they see what stuff he is made of. And he will be content, very content for the while, to forget his cares and his character, his naughtinesses and pre-occupations and take what is set before him without questioning.

To-morrow is time enough to ascertain what sort of people these are socially, and the geographical features of that land and to bring his mind up from grass and put it into harness. Long afterwards when he has come to know the people well, it is odds but he will remember with a strange kind of pleasure the first moments of that welcome to a foreign country—

'Not of themselves, the dark mysterious landing,
The blue lights and the green lights of the quay,
The cold air and sharp cries, and sailors standing,
The lingering sunset, and black gliding sea.

Not of themselves, the corn amid the heather,
The white and red roofs winking cheerfully,
The smells of ocean and of earth together,
Not of themselves, do they come back to me.'

But to-morrow comes. Oh! be sure of it, gradually to-morrow comes. And learning is difficult. The young plant must be carefully nurtured lest it put out leaves too soon and the slugs get it, or its head droops—and the post-mortem finds no roots. Not for the Little family is that iron discipline of the young Wesley, which on a set day of his palest dawn shut him in a room along with his letters, and only released him when he had digested the twenty-sixth.

And so it came about that one desultory time of twilight, Bobby—that choice young turnip—lay on a soft eiderdown on his mother's big bed and made the acquaintance of the alphabet. His brother was the tolerant teacher, it was a thin green book, and there was no hurry whatever.

The young turnip had a cold, or an apprehension of the Fly, or a paler colour than botany allows, something was alleged at any rate, and Bobby held a biscuit in his hand. There were bright stars in the dull lamp globe and the first long drawer of the shining mahogany Chesterfield contained treasures—jewellery—flora and fauna, marine and terrestrial—and works of the Orient. Bobby was polite, and his brother admired, so he attended sometimes to the little green book. But when you are new, and things are like a stage setting when the curtain is up and the lights down, and dim figures move obscurely about arranging furniture, how are you to realise an abstraction like HEN? Is it not better to see whether, if you black a wholemeal Middlemas all over with a black pencil except the holes, the holes will shine? And then try if eating it will poison you?

CHARLES FLETCHER.

*Editorial Note.*

Miss Harrison's article in the April CORNHILL, 'Another Plea for Old Age Homes,' has aroused considerable interest, and repeated inquiries have been made as to the Homes, the name of which was intentionally omitted by the author.

To satisfy these inquiries, I am permitted to state that these Homes are called 'Homes for the Aged Poor,' and that all information about them can be obtained from Miss C. E. Harrison, 212 Croydon Road, Anerley, S.E. 20. ED. CORNHILL.

# *MADAME GILBERT'S CANNIBAL.*

BY BENNET COPPLESTONE.

## III.—Father and Son.

They were gathered in the smoke-room, which was planted upon the boat-deck abaft the chart-house. It was the snuggery held in common by Madame and Ching and Ewing; to them was now added another—Willatopy, pilot. Madame, when she heard his name so unexpectedly, had switched up the lights behind her and invited him to enter. She wanted to see him clearly, and to collect her thoughts. All through the long voyage she had pictured her meeting with a naked cannibal, in the appropriate setting of a tropical coral island. Yet here and now had come to her out of the seas a young man, passably English in dress except for his bare feet, passably English in speech, and a good deal superior to the English in his masterly knowledge of the variegated depths in his native seas. The blue eyes of the young man who called himself Willatopy had astonished her, when first she came under their quick steely flash; now when they were bent upon her, quite plainly in admiration, she sensibly shrank before their bright intelligence. They were the Toppys eyes; she had admired them set in Sir John's pale face; out of the dark, almost black, countenance of young Willatopy they shone like beacons. They *were* beacons, the burning evidences of his Toppys blood.

It was their first night in the Straits—what Stevenson, pumped dry of tropical epithets, so often called 'a wonderful night of stars.' Yet Madame Gilbert had no eyes and no mind for the wonder of it. She could think of nothing but the Cannibal, who for months had seemed to be so very remote, and who was now close by, seated cross-legged like an Englishman upon a sofa-bunk. His lips and nostrils were rather broad, and his hair distinctly negroid—one should, I suppose, say Australoid—he was of the colour of strong coffee, yet he was not in the least like a cannibal.

'Gatepath must be even a bigger fool than I thought,' muttered Madame angrily to herself. Which was unjust. She had not, like Gatepath, been chased down to a boat by a naked, furious,

Willatopy, urging her on to speed by the prod of a fish-spear. But at that moment Madame was unwilling to be just, especially to Roger Gatepath.

'What makes your hair so red?' asked Willatopy suddenly.

'It grows that way,' murmured Madame feebly.

'I have never seen hair red like that,' observed Willatopy. 'At Thursday Island the white women's hair is black or muddy. Not nice. Your hair is very nice. It shines like red copper. And your skin is whiter than any skin I have seen. Are you white like that all over, under your clothes?'

'Young man,' said Ewing, who had just entered and caught the last inquiry, 'you are vairy indiscreet. Leddies do not possess what they are not pleased to show us.'

'No?' Willatopy, guileless of indiscretion, was about to proceed, while Ewing grinned and Ching frowned.

Madame for a moment almost blushed, and then laughed in her old rippling fashion.

'Willatopy,' said she, 'if you don't mind, we will change the subject. White men don't talk like that about white women, and you must try to behave like a white man. It was all your fault, Alexander,' she went on severely. 'If you had left the boy alone I would have dealt with him myself. How often must I tell you that Scotsmen have no tact?'

'The Scots are a vairy great people,' proclaimed Ewing unabashed. 'We are too great for the snivelling hypocrisy which the English folk call "tak." We say just what we think.'

'And that is what makes you so exasperating to live with,' rasped Madame.

'Scots!' cried Willatopy. 'I know the Scots. There was one of them at Thursday Island. He was always drinking whisky and always drunk. He used to chant songs—long, miles long—and used to shout as he rolled over, hugging a bottle: "From scenes like these old Scotia's gr-r-andeur springs."' Willatopy's exact imitation of the old drunkard's accent, which was not widely different from Ewing's own accent, sent Madame and Ching into a roar of laughter.

'I will mind yon,' growled the Chief.

'No, you won't,' commanded Madame. 'You will treat Willatopy very nicely. He is the pilot, and our lives are in his hands. You have brought your troubles on your own silly head, Alexander. Now, Willatopy, tell us about yourself, how you

came to be here, where you live, and how it is that you speak English so well.'

'I am not English,' said Willatopy, rather unnecessarily. 'My father was English, a very grand chief in his own country, but he did not love the English. He always said to me when I was so—so high.' He indicated a child of about the height of the bunk on which he was sitting. 'He said to me, "Willie, you belong to your mother's people. You are a Hula, of the tribe of fishers and swimmers and sailors of the sea. It is better to be a Hula than an Englishman." I remember the words of my father, whose hair was long and yellow, and his eyes blue like mine. The girls say——' He spoke a sentence in native dialect, and then translated: 'They say that my eyes are blue as the sky before dawn. The brown girls love my eyes. Do you love my eyes, Madame? I love yours, they shine like the English violets which my father planted, like the violets shine before the sun has soaked up the morning dew.'

'You should not say things like that, young man,' reproved Ewing. 'Madame will be very angry.'

'Oh, be quiet, Alexander,' snapped Madame Gilbert. 'I want to listen to the boy. He has paid me a pretty compliment. Thank you, Willatopy, I like your bright steely-blue eyes. The girls on your island have good taste.'

'Have you a husband, Madame?' inquired Willatopy eagerly.

'Yes,' replied Madame, with hardihood. 'I have a fine big husband, and I love him very much.'

'I am sorry,' said Willatopy, simply. 'I think that I should like to marry you myself. I am a grown man and very rich. I would have built a very fine hut for you on my island, and I would have taken one of my girls to be your maiden.'

'You are not very old, Willatopy, and it will be better fun for you not to be married just yet. My own fine big husband would not wish me to take another one, not even you.'

'No,' assented Willatopy, true to the strictly monogamous code of the Straits. 'One time, one husband. But it is a great pity. You are very beautiful, and I love you. The skipper, he called me a nigger, Madame, but you do not call me a nigger.'

'I didn't,' growled Ching, to whom the whole scene was highly offensive. 'But if it wasn't for Madame here, I would soon show you your proper place.'

'Willatopy is half white,' explained Madame. 'He is not an ordinary native. And you said yourself he was a daisy of a pilot.'

'So he is. As a pilot, and down with the men in the foc's'le, he would be in his proper place. But here, talking like this before you, he makes me sick. If you will excuse me, Madame, I will go to my chart-room.' Ching stumped off with a sour face, but the more politic Ewing remained. He did not propose that the novel attractions of Willatopy should have the field entirely to themselves.

Willatopy, though half white in blood, and quite passably well taught by his late father and in the mission schools on Murray Island, had all the inconsequence of a native. He would jump about from one subject to another, like a bee among flowers, sipping here and there, and then skipping on, forgetful of where he had last been. He continued to stare at Madame in deep admiration—never, in his small experience, had he seen a woman with hair so richly red, eyes of so dazzling a violet, or a figure so graciously indicated by the clinging folds of a modern dress. His idea of woman had hitherto been of the crudest—black hair and eyes, and brown untrammelled limbs. But though he continued to be absorbed by the feminine mystery of Madame, he forgot all about his recent matrimonial suggestions.

'I sail everywhere in my yawl,' said he. 'When the tide is high I go straight over the reefs. They are nothing. But when the water falls, I keep to the channels. Not the deep channels; the little ones which wander in and out among the islands. It was my father's yawl. He brought her out from England, from his own country. She was built—I forget where; perhaps I shall remember soon. It is no matter. In Baru, where I live with my mother and my sisters, my father bought miles and miles of shore and forest. It is all mine now, though my mother calls it hers. My father said to me "It will be all yours, Willie, when I die, though your mother must keep it while she lives." My father was very rich, and I am now very rich. I do no work. There are fish, plenty fish, in the sea; we catch them with nets and in our hands. We are Hula fishers, and the sea is our home as much as the land. We hunt turtle and dugong. Both are easy. If you will come with me to my island, Madame, I will show you how to fish on the Barrier Reef, and how to hunt the dugong with spears, and to catch the silly turtle with suckers. My father said, "When God

plants bananas and papaw and chestnuts in the woods, and fills the sea with fish and dugong and turtle, there is no need for man to waste his life in work." My father loved Baru and the Hula more than he loved England and the English. My father was a beach-comber,' added Willatopy proudly.

'I have never sailed the southern part of these Straits,' said Ewing. 'But I know New Guinea. The Hula tribe belong to New Guinea.'

'That is so,' assented Willatopy. 'My father took my mother from the Hula pile village at Bulaa, and brought her to Tops Island, which he bought. Not the whole island, but miles and miles of shore and forest. I am half English and half Hula, but I love Hula and hate English. Except you, Madame. When I go to Thursday Island in my yawl, to see my banker and to get my money—it comes from England, my money does, in big bags—I see English, and Japanese, plenty Japanese, but I do not love them, not a bit. I shall never go to England. My father said when I was so—so high—"Always stick to Hula, Willie, never go to England." And I never will.'

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Willatopy, standing in dignified solitude upon the captain's bridge, conned the *Humming Top* through the deep-water channels of bewildering intricacy which led from the Dungeness Reef to Thursday Island. Ching, too good a sailor not to recognise a master when he met one, had withdrawn into the chart-room and left Willatopy alone upon his unchallengeable eminence. The boy, quickly grasping the purpose and use of the steering telegraph, now transmitted his orders direct to the quartermaster beneath his feet in the wheelhouse. He was a sailor, by right of birth, on both sides of the house. His ancestors of Devon had played a faithful, if not very distinguished, part in the history of the Royal Navy; there has not often been a generation since Harry the Eighth without at least one Toppys in the books of the Navy Office. The Hulas of New Guinea, who to this day build their huts out to sea upon the butt ends of roughly driven piles—like our Neolithic ancestors of the Swiss lake dwellings—are a tribe of amphibians. Upon the maritime side of his being, there was no collision between white and brown blood in the veins of Willatopy. He was salt all through; saturated with the sea lore which is the subconscious heritage from a naval ancestry; bitten to the bone by sea instincts

derived from countless generations of Hula fishers in the coral waters.

'How in blazes do you remember like that?' asked Ching once, as Willatopy drove at full speed, with a five-knot tide under him, into the hidden maze of coral.

'I don't remember,' replied Willie easily, as he delicately manipulated the steering telegraph and swung the big yacht this way and that, as surely as a racing motorist swings his car, 'I don't remember; I know.' He never looked at Ching's chart, he never appeared to take any bearings—although those bright penetrative blue eyes, ranging out over the encircling islands, were all the while noting familiar land features and making their own quick unconscious calculations. He never hesitated for one instant. The skipper down below, following Willatopy's course upon the chart, would sometimes tremble when he saw by how much the boy ignored the line a careful Admiralty had laid down. But he was too wise to interfere. If you take a pilot you must trust to him; and Willatopy, though he scorned the professional title, was a pilot beyond compare. He did not remember; he knew.

Madame Gilbert was on the boat-deck when the yacht drew in towards Port Kennedy. She frowned viciously upon Thursday Island, that sorry western gate of the lovely tropic Straits. A treeless desolate waste, dotted with corrugated iron buildings. Cluster the iron buildings a little, drive wide dusty roads between clumps of them, and one has Port Kennedy, the seat of government. Impelled by greed of pearl and shell, and undeterred by the stark hideousness of the island, the sweepings of most nations have poured down upon that uncomely spot, and have greatly contributed to make it what it is, and to keep it from reaching up towards better things.

'Poor Willatopy,' murmured Madame, as she gazed upon the polluted scene. 'So this is his point of contact with white civilisation. Better Tops Island, a hundred times.'

A mile away from the port, Willatopy handed over his charge to her lawful skipper. 'Take her in. I go in my yawl.' He dropped down the bridge ladder and ran pattering along the deck. At a sign from Madame he stopped. 'I go in my yawl,' cried he, pointing to where that little craft of his bobbed up and down in the yacht's wash at the end of her towing line.

'But, Willatopy,' protested Madame, 'I am going to your

island, and we can't possibly find our way unless you come as our pilot.'

'I come, Madame, after two, three, days. You wait for me. I go to see my banker and to get my money, in a bag. Then I go to one of my brown girls. She loves my eyes, which are like the sky before dawn.'

Willatopy raced away aft. He pulled the yawl in by her line, vaulted over the yacht's rail and plumped down in the middle of her swaying deck. Up went mainsail, foresail, jib; she had no topsail. The driver had remained set. Willie cast off the line, and a moment later his little vessel was leaning over to the trade wind and flying up the harbour. The boy had not even troubled to stop the yacht's engines to make more easy his transhipment. And Ching did not love Willatopy enough to stop them for him. It was a flying transfer, but done so easily and surely that Madame hardly realised the simian skill of it. She stood by the rail watching the yawl pitch as the swell took her, and the white bare-headed figure which grew smaller and smaller every instant.

'So I have to wait at this horrible Thursday Island while Master Willie takes his pleasure with one of his brown girls. And it was only yesterday that he proposed himself to me as my husband! First it was Ching he put down; now it is Madame Gilbert. Presently it will be Alexander, and then it will be Marie. When you come to sit in the House of Lords, friend Willatopy, what a very, very, masterful Baron of Topsham you will be!'

The *Humming Top* tied up at the hulk which does duty for a wharf at Thursday Island, and Ewing, armed with a manifest of stores and with the joyous light of battle in his shrewd Scotch eye, departed to open an offensive upon the local markets. The skipper disappeared as skippers always disappear in harbour, and Madame was left alone. Port Kennedy was flagrantly uninviting, yet she felt impelled to go ashore. One always does. First she exchanged gracious compliments with the Administrator, to whom she carried letters of introduction from the Colonial Office, and then, by a happy inspiration, wandered off to find Willatopy's banker. The boy fascinated her and she wanted to talk about him. He was so entirely different from what Roger Gatepath had led her to expect that her mind was in a whirl. Perhaps this banker, who kept Willatopy's money—in large bags—might prove to be an understanding and communicative friend. He proved to be both—though Robert Grant, like all managers of banks in

the outer fringes of the Empire, was a Scot of Scots. Madame commanded confidences even from a Scot of Scots.

'Mr. Grant,' said she, after her connection with the family of Toppys had been discreetly explained, 'this queer boy Willatopy swooped down upon us in his yawl out of the wide sea, saved the family yacht from imminent destruction on the reefs in your most dangerous Straits, piloted us up here as easily as if he were sailing his own little boat, and then vanished. I understand that he has been here to draw his money in a bag, and has skipped away in his own rapid decided fashion to lay tribute at the naked feet of one of his brown girls. As a scorcher this Willatopy of yours would give points to any young man whom I have ever met.'

Grant smiled. 'He is what the Americans call a live wire. But, before I tell you what I know about him, may I be permitted to ask the purpose of your inquiries?'

Madame saw that she must put most of her cards on the table. The finer arts of feminine diplomacy would be wasted upon a creature so direct.

'That yacht yonder of mine,' said she, 'is owned by Sir John Toppys of Wigan, cousin and heir of the late Lord of Topsham. I have come out at his request to visit the irregular branch of the family which is settled in the Torres Straits, and to do what I can to help them if they need, or will accept, my help.'

'Sir John Toppys, cousin and heir,' repeated Grant curiously. 'Has the direct line then failed?'

Madame explained how the casualties of war had left the House desolate.

'So Sir John Toppys, cousin of the late Lord, is the heir,' mused Grant reflectively. His brow puckered and he looked at Madame acutely and suspiciously. She bore the scrutiny in that bland impenetrable way which has so often baffled me.

'So you are interested,' said he at last, 'in the irregular branch?' The emphasis upon the adjective was unmistakable.

'Well,' drawled Madame Gilbert, 'you will agree that the colour is somewhat unusual.'

Grant smiled again. He was thinking hard, and it was plain that he was familiar with the ramifications of the family of Toppys, and with the lawful rights of the twenty-eighth Baron. Until that moment, however, he had not known that the direct white heirs had failed.

When he spoke, it was with deliberate, anxiously deliberate, emphasis. 'The kindest service which you can render, Madame, to the coloured branch of Toppys is to leave them alone—in happy ignorant security. I repeat, ignorant security.'

Madame drew a deep breath. For reasons which she did not yet appreciate, but which she was soon to understand, Willatopy's banker was on her side, the side of Sir John Toppys, Baronet, of Wigan.

'I was an intimate friend of Will Toppys,' went on Grant. 'I loved him and think that I, alone among his white friends, sympathised with his withdrawal from white civilisation. Money and honours meant nothing to his simple soul. The few hundreds a year which he drew through me from his property in England, the small plantation which he bought upon Tops Island, sufficed. He was in his way wealthy, and also in his own way gloriously happy. His wife—you have not seen his wife—honoured him as a king of men. Willatopy, his only son, worshipped him as a god. You may perhaps have noticed how Willatopy, although but twelve years old when his father died, quotes his lightest saying as the last word in human or divine wisdom?'

Madame nodded.

'I was my friend's executor, and, in my humble way, have tried to be a guardian to Willatopy. I love the boy for his father's sake and his own sake. He is a good boy. His courage has the quality of tempered steel; he is honest and generous. He comes here about once a month, draws a pound or two in silver from me, buys gear for his yawl and a few delicacies for his family —they all have a queer passion for sardines and tinned tongue— picks up some beads for his brown girls, and then disappears. He does not drink; he has not, I believe, ever tasted alcohol. His relations with brown girls are those customary in the Straits. Here, Madame, boys and girls follow their inclinations, but they are free from the vices of the white races. The unmarried flit from flower to flower, but those who are married—though wedded by the sketchiest of native ceremonial—are faithful to one another with a rigidity unknown in Europe or America. All the vices and all the diseases in these islands are the gift of the white man. I have always feared for Willatopy, and now your coming fills me with dread for him. White and brown blood form a bad mixture, an explosive mixture, a mixture unstable as nitro-glycerine. So long as Willie remains brown and follows the precepts of his father he will be

safe and happy. But let him incline by ever so little towards the white side of him—let him once awaken to a taste for wine or whisky, and become conscious of the seductions of white women, and Willatopy will be a lost soul. Here in my desk lies the will of my friend Toppys, and other papers. I see the danger which threatens Willatopy, and I tremble. Take your yacht away, Madame Gilbert, and trouble the boy no more.'

'I have no wish—we have no wish—that Willatopy should leave the Torres Straits, least of all that he should go to England. But he interests me extremely, and I would see more of him and of his home before we go away. It will be but for a few weeks, Mr. Grant, and all that while I will be his zealous guardian. Besides myself there is only one white woman in the yacht, and she is my maid and at my strict orders. I can appreciate the danger of alcohol for him, but surely a boy like Willatopy—whose eyes are blue as the sky at dawn—has already experienced the seductions of sex?'

'No!' emphatically declared Robert Grant. 'Where there are no clothes there is no curiosity, and where there is no conscious shame there is no viciousness. Willatopy in the hands of an unscrupulous white woman would become a devil. Drink and debased white women are the man-eating tigers in the path of his life; if they fall upon Willatopy they will devour him. Go back to your yacht, Madame Gilbert, turn her head towards England, and trouble us no more.'

'Bereft of our accomplished pilot we should be ashore within the hour,' quoth Madame slyly.

'The boy's a wonder,' mused Grant. 'He arrives and conquers without an effort. He has bound you to him by his skill in pilotage, and now, I suppose, you will make him lead you to his island, happy no longer. The curses of the white man will descend upon it, and upon him. Drink and lust. . . . You will not have known the father of Willatopy; he was before your time. In the eyes of the world he was mad; in all eyes, perhaps, except my own. He gave up his home in England, he married a Hula girl out of New Guinea, and he settled upon Tops Island. All these evidences of rank insanity are known to you; to me alone is known an incident which would class Will Toppys among the doddering idiots. When I first heard of it from the man's own lips I was staggered. I am a Scot, and a banker, and a materialist. I should not have done what he did; I would have realised a quick fortune and dashed home to bonny Scotland. I do not live on

this filthy island for fun. You cannot conceive, Madame, how after thirty years of the tropics I ache for a bitter Scots haar. But Will Toppys was true to himself; he rejected the lure of the millions as he had rejected that of the thousands and the hundreds. During the wanderings of Will Toppys some twenty years ago, when first he went to New Guinea, he came across an old Australian gold-hunter, one of the original gang who in the 'fifties had staked out claims and washed gravel for gold dust in the river beds beyond Ballaarat. This old fellow had found gold in a creek in New Guinea, and was washing for dust in the old old patient fashion when Toppys discovered him. The old man was unhappy. He had, it is true, found gold in paying quantities, but mixed with the gold was some dark heavy obtrusive substance which clogged his daily operations. The gold would not wash clear by itself. Always it was mixed with this miserable stuff which had to be painfully separated from it. The old man showed Toppys some of it; he had kept a little under his bunk but had thrown the rest away. Neither Toppys nor the digger knew anything of the stuff except that it was a nuisance. But Toppys took a pinch or two away with him in an envelope. His curiosity was so far stimulated that he despatched the envelope to the Assay Office at Brisbane and asked for particulars of identity.

'Years afterwards he showed me the reply which came to him from the Assay Office. The dark obtrusive heavy metal, which the old digger had been throwing away because it interfered with the purity of his gold dust, was one of the iridium family, of great commercial importance, and was valued at fifty pounds sterling an ounce. Fifty pounds an ounce! By comparison the gold dust was mere dross. You will inquire, as I did, what course William Toppys took. Many men, who pass for honest, would have persuaded the old man to sell his claim for some derisory pittance and have stolen the fruits of his discovery. Others would have offered to help the old man at his gold-washing and have taken their payment in osmiridium. Others again would have slain the discoverer. Toppys did none of these things. He went to the old digger's hut to acquaint him with the gift which God had sent, and found that, while he waited, God had vouchsafed another and a greater boon. The old man lay in his bunk dead. Toppys buried him there amid the wealth of which he had never learned the value—and went away. The man was true to himself. He had come to the Torres Straits to live the simple native life,

and he would not look back for all the riches of New Guinea at fifty pounds an ounce. And he never disclosed to anyone, even to me, the secret of the deposits. They were somewhere on the south coast—that was all that he would tell. His reason was like himself, sanely mad. God, who had hidden those treasures for millions of years, had disclosed them to two men—one who was dead and the other as good as dead. Toppys accepted the revelation as a divine test of his sincerity, and it would, in his eyes, have been sacrilege to have given away or sold the knowledge. I admit,' concluded Grant, rather savagely, 'that if I could have won the secret from him I would have scratted up the blessed stuff with my finger-nails. Fifty pounds an ounce! More than a million pounds a ton. From his own point of view Will Toppys was right in rejecting the useless wealth, but I still think that he might have given me the tip.'

'I must tell that story to Alexander,' said Madame, 'if only to enjoy his writhings. Fifty pounds the ounce! Poor Mr. Grant, and poor Alexander! Though one does not need to be a Scot to jump at fifty pounds an ounce. I could do a bit of scratching at that price with my own lily hands.'

'That was William Toppys, the father of Willatopy. Though how that serene and unworldly soul came to inhabit the body of an ancient and commonplace Toppys passes my poor comprehension. Willatopy, who worshipped his father as a god, is not a bit like him in temperament. He reminds me sometimes curiously of an English public-school boy. He has the typically English unintellectual love of life. There is nothing of the anchorite about him. He enjoys every minute of his life. His virility and extraordinary endurance are Melanesian. Do you know how William Toppys died when that boy of his was twelve years old? No? Let me tell you, and perhaps my story of the son will be as illuminating as my story of the father. Toppys loved his son, though he could have wished him to have been less dark. The sisters are almost white, not darker in skin than many southern Europeans. Willatopy is black beside them. Toppys and his son were always about in their yawl which the father brought out from England. It is fully decked and a fine sea boat. They went everywhere in it and cared nothing for the storms or the currents which make our navigation so difficult and dangerous. It was in March of 1912 that William Toppys was killed—accidentally killed in the presence of Willatopy.'

'Killed!' exclaimed Madame. 'I did not know that.'

'Yes, killed. I have the particulars here in my drawer with the—the other papers. Toppys and the boy were cruising to the north, and one evening at sunset had let go their anchor in the lee of a wide coral garden. It was the season of monsoon, when storms and rain sweep down from the north-west. The wind blows sometimes with hurricane velocity. We have a very brief twilight; at one stride comes the dark, or almost. The anchor had gone down in fifteen feet of water on the edge of the coral, and Toppys had gone forward to lower the sails. Somehow, I don't know how, his feet became entangled and he pitched overboard. This was nothing in itself. The yawl has not more than two inches of rail, and both father and son frequently went overboard without intention. Willatopy swims like a seal and Toppys was quite at home in the water. Willatopy, when he heard the splash, ran forward, cast off the halliard of the mainsail and threw the bight over the rail. It was difficult to climb back without a line. He saw his father come to the surface, gasp, roll over, and sink again, leaving a trail of blood in the sea. As he fell, Toppys must have struck his head against a spur of coral, and when he gasped must have filled his lungs with water. He sank like a stone to the bottom. It was after sunset and rapidly growing dark. Willatopy, the small boy of twelve, dived at once and sought for the heavy man of twelve stone on the floor fifteen feet below. It was already dark below and quite a minute passed before Willatopy got his hand under his father's arm and struck up to the surface. Then he found himself six feet from the yawl and drifting past her. There followed a furious struggle. The small boy, hopelessly overweighted, fought every inch of the distance, struggled across those interminable two yards, and just got his fingers on the counter as the current carried him away. If he had missed his last grab at the low rail Willatopy could never have swum back bearing his father's body, and he would never have let go. He is Melanesian in muscle and skin, but his heart is that of an English bulldog. The boy's fingers gripped the rail, he hung at arm's length, and with the other arm he grappled to him the man whom he worshipped as a god. Picture to yourself the situation. The night had fallen, the wind was soughing overhead and threatening a gale; the tide was swirling past the coral and dragging at Willatopy's burden—and the mainsail halliard, by which alone he could essay to regain the yawl, was more than fifteen feet distant towards the bows. And Willatopy

was twelve years old, and his father weighed twelve stone. I want you to get all these details clear before you, Madame. An English boy could never have done what Willatopy did then, and afterwards. He would have possessed the heart, but not the lithe enduring strength nor the profound sea knowledge.

'Willatopy pulled himself in towards the boat, and her side inclined slightly towards him. Then he gave the leap and kick of a dolphin and shifted his grip from the counter to the side rail. By a succession of kicks and leaps he worked his way for'ard inch by inch, foot by foot. He does not know how long it took him to reach the halliard, which trailed in the water. He says it was hours, but Willatopy has vague ideas of time. But at last he arrived. He seized the line and swung clear. Treading water, he passed the line under his father's arms, and made sure that when his own support was withdrawn the man's head would be clear of the water. All through that desperate one-armed progress from the stern to the midships of the yawl, Willatopy had never once loosened his grip upon his father, nor allowed the dear drooping head to sink under water. Then, when his father had been securely tied, Willatopy worked forward to the anchor chain and climbed on board by the bowsprit. He was up and hauling in an instant. The yawl inclined more and more as the heavy body came in over the rail, but the boy took a grip on the deck with his naked toes and hauled more vigorously than ever. Now was the beloved body stretched at last upon the deck. The boy felt a long gash on his father's head and could not distinguish a sign of life. There was no breath that he could perceive in the limp sodden body. The Hula fishers of New Guinea have their own methods of restoring the apparently drowned. Willatopy applied them. He also remembered his father's lessons and turned them to account, working the dead arms up and down to induce respiration. It was dark as a wolf's mouth; Willatopy had to work by touch and ear. He went on until the grey dawn found him still working. And then he knew that his father was dead. The blue Toppys eyes were cold and sightless. The body which Willatopy had rubbed and kneaded all through the night was becoming fixed in the rigor of death. Willatopy rose up and went below. He filled himself vigorously with food, thinking hard all the time of a method by which he should transfer his father from the exposed deck to the little bunk which had been his bed at sea. He felt very lonely. His white god had withdrawn its presence; no longer would the

two, father and son, sail the seas together. In the ordinary sense I do not think that Willatopy grieved at all. He was too busy. After a vigorous attempt he was obliged to leave the body on the deck. His strength was not equal to the work of transfer to the cabin, but he did what he could. He lashed the body so that it could not be disturbed by the rough movements of the yawl, or by the washing of heavy seas. Then he set the sails, hauled up the anchor, and laid a course for home. The disaster had occurred some fifty miles to the north of Tops Island. But three days passed before a small boy, grey with exhaustion and the continual beating upon his naked body of salt sea foam, sailed a yawl, with the corpse of his father lashed to its deck, into the harbour of Murray Island thirty miles to the south.

'Of those three days Willatopy can tell little. He had been caught in a furious gale and blown out into the Gulf, driving before it with no sails set except the small jib. Soon after leaving the fatal anchorage where Toppys had been killed, Willatopy's eye for weather had told him to strip the yawl of her canvas, and she had come down, as it were, from full dress to a loin-cloth before the tempest burst. For twenty-four hours—as Willie put, it "from sun to sun"—he had sat by the tiller without food or sleep. And the previous night had been sleepless too. Then the wind fell, but the waves ran high under the eternal Pacific swell. By lashing the tiller for a few minutes at a time the boy was able to take food, but sleep was still denied to him. He came back in long reaches, steering by the sun, for he had been blown far from familiar waters. He was a long way to the south of Tops Island and east of the Great Barrier itself, so that when he sighted land after two whole days in the open it was a great unknown unfriendly reef within which the passages were narrow and tortuous. Still, he worked his way through, and, getting under shelter of a strange island, let go his anchor and slept. I do not think that he could have held out but for that God-given sleep. And so, after yet another day, he arrived in Murray Island. They took his father's body and would have buried it there, but Willatopy forbade. He was all right, he said, and going on home, but for the moment he was tired and wanted to lie up among friends. So the good souls of Murray Island made a rough coffin, and laid Toppys upon that bunk in the little cabin where he had so often slept. Willatopy slept peacefully on the opposite bunk. He did not shrink from his father's body as an English boy would have done; he was happy in the

thought that his god was still with him. And then, still alone, that boy of twelve sailed homeward with his father's corpse. He laughed when assistance was offered and scorned companionship. "Now that my father is dead I will sail his yawl," said he. "No one understands her except him and me." Will Toppys is buried near the hut where he had lived with his wife and children. The family buried him themselves, and repeated over his body the prayers which the dead man had taught them. That is how William Toppys died, and that is how his son, a little boy of twelve years old, brought his father home.'

Madame Gilbert's eyes were full of tears, and she did not speak for some minutes.

'He comes of good stock,' said she at last. 'Blood always tells.'

'Good stock,' assented Grant, 'on both sides of the house. If his father was a Toppys of Devon, his mother is a Hula of New Guinea. Willatopy is grit all through.'

'I am very, very much obliged to you,' said Madame. 'I understand now something of the father, and more of the son. Believe me, I wish Willatopy nothing that is not good.'

'Then,' said Grant, very seriously, 'if you mean him nothing except good, you will sail away from the Torres Straits and trouble him no more.'

*(To be continued.)*

# *A MEMORY OF THE MISCHABEL.*

## (*THE TASCH-HORN BY THE SOUTH FACE.*)

I USED to tell this story, but add that it would never be written, or, at least, not written until 'time and fair weather, which are apt to prove fatal to most alpine first estimates,' had contrasted our impressions with those of later repetitions of the ascent, or until forgetfulness had subdued them into a distant and calmer perspective. But the years have passed, the nerve strains of war, the sight of suffering and catastrophe have come and gone, and still as I look back the memories of one day stare at me across the cloudy interval, summits and depths of sensation, startling and still unapproached by all the interrupting ranges of emotion heaped up in the mind during the long insurgence of chaos and human passion. We have grown less nice about the mention of unpleasing experiences, less timid of alluding to 'nerves' as respectable origins for masculine as well as feminine conduct. The terms nerve-strain, shell-shock, and their like, have almost accustomed us to accept nervous disturbances as natural and temporary phenomena, neither reflecting upon, nor even inconsistent with, the normal heroism of the men affected. This more honest understanding by the many of facts that have always been commonplaces to the adventurous few, makes it at long last more easy for me to sketch some details necessary for the truth of the picture without the same fear of misconstruction, and in so far it sets me free to do tardy, but even better, justice to the gallantry and endurance of my colleagues, and—I use the word deliberately—to the incomparable mountaineering prowess of one member of the party.

Franz' performance was the greatest feat of mountaineering I have ever witnessed, and, after fifteen years of further experiences, I will add the greatest I can imagine. Nor can I suppose that in its mastery of natural difficulty, in its resistance to the physical effects of cold and fatigue, and in its disregard of the nervous infections of prolonged depression, doubt, and danger, it has often been surpassed as an individual achievement on any field of perilous adventure or conflict. And after all that, you will find the story very flat! Emotion is the light by which we see a scene. We can experience it and recall it, but we cannot reproduce it in

words simultaneously with the description of the incidents which reflected it.

For several seasons I had a fancy to ascend great peaks by untrodden routes that might recapture for me something of the pristine novelty and romance of their first conquest. This brought me occasionally across the path of that comet of the Alps, V——, Josef, and Franz, into whose tail my guide, little J., and I were willingly swept in somewhat irregular conjunction. So long as there was no danger, in the mountaineering sense, we all climbed unroped. In a danger zone we grouped on to our respective ropes, a trio and a duet, and took our several lines as we pleased. Where there was no safe 'standing,' as occasionally happened, for any member of the party of three or the party of two, roped up at 100-foot intervals, the groups joined up. There are few mountain passages that do not allow of good holding for at least one member of the party which is spaced out along 400 feet of rope. We were all competent to get along individually, and as it was generally possible for several of us to be moving simultaneously—while the remainder held firm—we gained the extra security that a span of five men gives, and occupied no more time than a rope of three.

We had decided from the top of the Weiss-horn that the Täsch-horn from the south was climbable. I based my opinion upon what may be called *primâ facie* evidence, to wit, that every south 'face' must have a route up it, and that it was our habit and privilege to make the 'first.' V—— had sounder grounds, in a view from the ridge of the peak itself. The final pyramid, which, owing to the forking of the two chimneys up the face, out to left and right on to the south-east and west ridges, presents to Zermatt the semblance of a formidable diamond of precipice, might prove the ace of trumps against us; but we could possibly cut out on to either ridge, and as it lay with us to lead off, we were safe in opening the game with a light heart.

We idled up to the luxury of a night at the Täsch-alp, and spent a first grey dawn of mist—whose moisture was responsible for much of our later trouble on the peak—in a somnolent false start, and a cheerful return to wild-raspberry jam.

Our second start, at 1.45 A.M., brought us up into a cold and clear grey dawn that glimmered all too ominously from glaze and snow froth on the higher peaks. We sprinted up the northern bay of the Weingarten Glacier to the foot of the face. The fore-shortening from this point and the cunning lie of the strata gave

to the angle of the rocks a most deceitful appearance of brevity, ease, and darkling innocence of snow. One prophet murmured of the top at 9.30; another conceded until mid-day. But the great central chimney up the face, although clear of any traces of stone-fall, had to be at once rejected from among our alternative lines. It was festooned and freakishly upholstered with ice, and a frash of new snow on its leaning ledges brought a qualm of doubt as to all that might be lying hidden on the less visible belts of the face. A steep but plausible buttress on the west of the chimney was our unanimous choice. It mounted genially out of the glacier, and gave us all we could ask for of subtle furrow and rib, with 'wrinkle' holds of the Welsh cliff pattern. But higher up we became aware that the ledges sloped wrong, and that each rock tilt as it became visible, held a white plaster of snow. I have a recollection of an ill-looking, crooked funnel, upright and bitten into the nose of the buttress, with its snowy lining dark-dappled and smirched by the up-wriggling of my predecessors, where I first suggested to little J., who was climbing below me, that convention suggested our roping together. And, later, there follow several flash-light records of Franz' brown face—he was climbing last of the trio ahead—looking down at me pensively and silently, his fashion of expressing a more vocal guide's 'How goes it?' or 'What about a rope to help here?'

Higher again, I was not disinclined to use a spare rope, fixed and considerately left in a glaciated and knobbly perpendicular groove; and not far above this we all collected for breakfast on a small relenting, but snow-laden, rock bracket that projected out over space and the great chimney on the east of our buttress. It was 7.30, and this halt, permitting only of a chilly standing and a swallowing of food with woolly frozen gloves, proved to be our last 'rest,' or convenient platform of assembly, during the whole ascent. Above us the buttress merged into the face. Far above, the snow fringe, catching the sunlight on the crest of the west ridge, looked deceptively near. Between the two, the rock terraces, slanting upward across the face to the east, leaned back promisingly. We were yet only gradually to discover that each lift of the smooth, friable rock was surmounted by no gratifying shelf, but by a rounded glacis, steep and slippery and holdless, vexed with snow, and sliding up, malicious and unbroken, against the sheer rise of the following step. But already at intervals I began to detect a distant suggestion of that atmospheric depression in the guides,

humour which often warns us, through the instinct of the few great among the hill-born men, that there is grave work in prospect even before their eyes have discovered it. V—— was, however, as always, concentrated upon the immediate 'forward,' and his imperious, staccato sentences, melodious and never modified by any hush of breathless circumstance, had their usual effect upon his high-mettled team.

The buttress slid us stealthily up and out on to the face. The terraces drew us insidiously up and on. I soon forgot any premonitory symptoms in the exhilaration of clinging up smooth facet after smooth facet of rock, and crawling and hand-pressing up each holdless, disappointing glacis as it followed in ruthless succession. I was not concerned with 'stances,' such as would allow me to stop and anchor the rope. Where I could go, little J. could more than follow safely, and surely the next shelf must be as level as it looked from below? Meanwhile, I was only intent to keep my rope up to the tremendous pace set by the trio ahead.

There is nothing lulls a leader's judgment more fatally to sleep than the passage ahead of another party or even a man climbing 'off the rope' in front of him. The task of settling *whether* or not to proceed is taken from him; he has only to think *how* to pass where another has already gone. If little J. and I had been climbing in our usual cautious communion, I have small doubt that we should have been sooner alive to the doubt whether we should find it wholesome to descend all that we were grappling up so confidently. But my own mind was out of that complete identification with its own rope upon which the collective value of a party for judgment and for achievement deepnds. It was set upon the growing interval between myself and the speedy rhythm of the men ahead. I have sometimes thought that the presence of a cheerful amateur, who was similarly out of touch with the unison and 'feeling' of their rope, and rattling tin-cannily, if always more distantly, at their heels, may have had something to say to the trio's, that is, their leader, Josef's, continuance until well beyond the time when his sound judgment must have become aware of the gravity of what we were doing and of all that it threatened in the event of our retreat. It may well be so; but then, again, what was there, upward, downward, or across in the mountain world, that Josef, Franz, and V—— might not justifiably attempt and confidently face as a return?

I began to notice that the trio dotted up the diagonal markings

on the grey face above, were pausing from time to time, as if to wait for us. This spurred us on the more. About the same time that recording angel, sensation, signalled to me that I was wrestling up the steepening walls and their lean-to roofs more awkwardly and slowly. Experience teaches us early to distinguish between the causes that may produce this feeling, and I was able to assign it confidently in this case to the fact that the class of difficulty was getting beyond me, and not to a fluctuation in my own 'standard of the day.'

The precipices beetled their brows always more harshly over us, and forced us more and more on to a line of treacherous diagonal traverses, upward to the right and along the trend of the strata towards the central chimney. Traversing up these leaning, slithery ledges without a vestige of good hold, was no work for a rope of two. Little J., if he went ahead, could be of no more use to me than I was to him. But, imperceptibly still, the promise of a better stance above the next wall, and again above the next wall, each ending in invariable disappointment, led us up and on. The gentler transverse inclination of the evasive bands deceived the eye as to the terrific actual steepness of the precipice to which we were now all too deeply committed.

V—— called back to me to suggest that I should rope on behind Franz, in our usual fashion for such danger zones. I believe this to have been his generous reply to a suggestion made about this time that the trio ought to try and push ahead, while little J. and I should be advised to make our own way down. I recall the incident merely to indicate how doubtful already seemed the prospect of a successful issue, and how far the peculiar method which we followed, of separate ropes—so successful on other occasions, but so dangerous on this owing to the insidious character of the rocks—had already succeeded in hustling our mountaineering discretion.

Reassured by the pleasant moral of Franz' rope, the more agreeable for its rarity, I found the immediate business of not falling off the planes of traverse less preoccupying. It is an illustration of the psychic value of the rope, that we were no sooner united physically than I began to be more acutely sensible of the depression that had long been gathering in the lead, although, spatially, we were in no closer touch than before. I felt it to the extent at least of realising that the element of cheerfulness, the oxygen of a confident climbing atmosphere, needed replenishing. The day was still bright and young and the men obviously in fine

climbing form; it was no effort to telephone hearty remarks up and down the rope, or to emerge at Franz' feet after each struggle with a breathless but honest grin. But still the cliffs leaned out at us; still the unchancey upward and sideways traversing was forced upon us. A little cloud of anxiety crept upon the edge of the mind. The eye glanced unwillingly up or down, eluding the questions that the sight suggested. Hands and feet became gradually numb with the uninterrupted clinging to rounded, cold and slippery ledges.

At last—and how vividly the scene starts to mind—I stood on such a shelf, looking up at Franz' head and shoulders as he poised over a sheer wall above me, his prehensile feet balancing him erect upon a gutter, whose gracelessness I was yet to discover. The wall up to him bothered me a little, and as I got one arm over the coping and felt only the comfortless incline of the narrow band, I called out in joking patois, 'Watch out, Franz, for the rope!' He looked down at me and beyond thoughtfully, almost abstractedly, without the customary flash of big brown eyes and big white teeth. 'You must do what you can; *here* we can no longer help one another!' And then he turned away, dropping my rope, symbolically, from his hand and watching his brother, whose struggles, invisible to me, were audible far up round a black, repulsive corner. From such a man the words had the effect of an icy douche. The detachment which a leader may never lose, whatever his occupation with his struggles, returned upon the instant. I looked down over my arm to see the deadly continuity of descending precipice with its narrow, snowy eave-lets leaning out one above another dizzily, and seeming to shrug even the glance of the eye off into space, and to realise in a flash what a return down them must mean. I looked up, to discover that worse lay before us if we failed to force a way up the chimney into which we were traversing for an escape. For hours, deceived by our spacing from each other up the ladder of sham terraces, we must have been climbing independently, each of us in reality unprotected by the man above, the slip of any one imperilling the rest. For how many more hours would this, or could we, continue?

A slight, pricking snow began to drift across us. From the exposed height of our great pyramid, surging above other ranges, we looked out across a frozen and unheeding stillness of white peak and glacier, disappearing under darker clouds to the south. We seemed very much removed from the earth, and very much

alone. As I turned back to the rock I could see nothing but antagonism in the ice-wrinkled face of the crags upon which we were venturing; and I had the feeling—it was too formless at the time to take the definite shape I must now give to it—as if somewhere low down beyond the horizon a great grey bird was just lifting on its wings into heavy flight. As the hours wore on, this shadow at our backs seemed to be covering more and more of the sky, gradually enclosing us within its spread of cold wings, and isolating us from all the world of movement in our contest with the frigid wall of grey precipice.

Precariously we crawled up to and along, and up to and along, the sloping ribbons, silky with chill snow, that led interruptedly towards the buttress-corner, shutting us off from the big couloir. On the decrepit mantelpiece by which we turned the corner itself, we could use a rock 'belay' for the rope, one of the only three we found on all this upper face! We were more or less together now, on a slim, shattered ledge, that ran inwards at a high level across the sheer wall of rock forming our side of the rift. Forty feet below us the slabs on the floor of the chasm itself slanted steeply down into space. Past us, and above us, they mounted precipitously, to splay out in an amphitheatre of perpendicular walls far above. And every hopeless curve of slab was glassy with ice and glitter-film. The couloir, as an upward escape, needed no second glance. Josef was already clinging down the wall to the slabs below. His object was plain. The same belt or flaw by which we had entered the rift started again, at a lower level, beyond the floor slabs of the couloir, and disappeared round the corner of the buttress which formed its further containing wall. What could be seen of its restart was no more than a down-sloping step of slab, breaking the profile of the vertical corner opposite us, and winding steeply upwards and round the buttress out of our sight. He had evidently made up his mind that our only chance, now the couloir had failed, was to resume our perilous ribbon traverses along the bands which seemed to continue across the face, in the hope of finding the second, smaller chimney, the branch which forked out on to the south-east ridge, accessible, and if accessible, less icy-hearted. It appeared to me, and probably to him, a very faint and rather fearsome chance. Even the slabs below us, that gave difficult access to the giddy restart of the traverse, looked daunting enough.

Was there no alternative? Far above us to the right, and above the vanishing end of the hopeless couloir, I could see the

snow crest of the west ridge as it descended steeply from the peak. It looked very remote, and there was no way to it! But immediately above our ledge, the west ridge descended so steeply that at the point where our wall must be reaching it, vertically above our heads, its edge could not be so very far off. Stuck like stamp-paper on to the side of the rift, it was impossible for us to see far up. A short initial overhang, twenty feet of rock almost sheer, but bristly as a clothes-brush, and then a silvery lace of snow against the sky that *must* mean a set-back in the angle. It seemed certainly worth trying, and far shorter if it would go! Franz waved it aside without comment. Little J. gave it longer consideration; but he was behind, and could not count. Josef was already more than occupied with the slabs, and, therefore, not to be distracted. But I still think it might have proved the less desperate alternative.

Josef moved tentatively about on the near side of the slabs, steadied by V——. He never looked like succeeding, and I think that the nearer view of the start of the traverse was weakening his resolution. The dark, chilly chasm gave muffled echoes to his agitated comments. Franz, beside me on the ledge, watched him, hissing a gay little French song between his teeth, the only sign of excitement I have ever known him display. Then, 'It won't go!' a hollow shout from below, and 'But it must go!' from Franz, who at once leaped into action. I untied my rope to him. He was down and out on to the slabs in a breath, still singing to himself. He caterpillared his way across the ice-bones above Josef. Josef, and other great guides, on slabs moved with the free poise of an athlete and the foot-cling of a chamois. Franz, in such case, had the habit and something of the appearance of a spider or crustacean. His curled head disappeared altogether; his body and square shoulders split and elongated into four radiating, steely tentacles, leaving only in the centre an imponderable hub of intelligence, which transmitted the messages between his tiny hands and feet, as they clung attached and writhing at fantastic angles and distances.

At the far side of the slabs he crawled on to and up the sloping shelf of the disappearing traverse, only keeping himself on it, so far as could be seen, by thrusting one foot firmly out against the other. Presently V—— followed, out of sight, and then Josef. Even with little J. up behind me on the wall, I found the descending crossing of the iced flooring of the couloir nasty enough, especially

when the rope, sagging from above and across, began to pull back upon me with a heavy draw. But the start of the traverse looked unspeakable. A downward and outward leaning shelf, with space below and an overhanging wall above, it screwed steeply upward out of sight round the buttress. From far up along it came Josef's voice, thinly crying caution. How to keep on the shelf—and, much more, wriggle up it. Little J. joined me on the ice-nicks in the slabs, and after many attempts, the end of Josef's rope, slung from above and weighted with a stone, was lassoed back and round to a point on the slabs from which we could recover it. Once on the shelf, I found that there was nothing to keep me on it against the urgency of the slant into space. A hailing match between little J. and Josef only produced the information that while he was 'good' to hold—but not to pull—along the diagonal upward line of the shelf, he was helpless against any downward direct strain, such as would result if one fell off the shelf. There was nothing for it but to thrust desperately upward, relying upon the friction of the outer knee on the hem of the sloping ribbon to resist an outward drag, to which the weight of the world seemed to be added. Of service, also, were two or three painful finger-tip pinches on the down-sloping prickles of the overhanging wall above. When I reached Josef, I found his 'belay'—the second of our dauntless three—was only a prong of rock projecting downward from the overhang above him like the bent pick of an axe, and of course useless against a pull from any but the one, sideways, direction. His legs sprawled over slab rugosities. Little J., who had by now begun his assorted collection of all our sacks and axes, followed up magnificently.

I have no clear recollection of the series of traverses up and across the face that followed. After a short easier interval, they became, if anything, steeper and more outward sloping than before. The snow on them grew slimier and colder, the day darker, the sprinkling pepper of snow-fall denser and keener. Hands and feet grew lifeless and lost their touch, and there was never a single sound holding-ledge for any one of the party. We began that monotonous beat of any unoccupied toe or hand against the rock that alone kept the blood alive during the long cold hours of halt and fight and creep and creep and fight and halt. On the next day my own toes and finger-tips were bruised blue, and a few fingers still retain the lowered vitality that follows on frost-bite. But at the time no lesser trouble could get its head above the dark

tide of oppression that absorbed all the spaces of consciousness. The fight went on doggedly with that determination to take no long views, but to make just the next hold good and the one more step secure, which enables the human atom to conquer such heights of effort and to disregard such lengths of suffering.

The next clear memory is of finding ourselves inside the second chimney, a precipitous, narrow cleft up the face, of worn, skull-smooth rock. It was all dirty white and dull blue in the gloomy afternoon light, with blurred ice nubbles bulking through the adhesive snow. But at least there was the singular rest for eye and nerves that the feeling of enclosing walls gives us after long hours on an exposed protuberant cliff. We even found a stance or two in ice-pockets on chock-stones, where we could *almost* hold on without help from the hands. Franz, who was back above me, resting from the lead, could spare me a few partial hoists with the rope. I began to feel my muscles slackening with the relief, and I became conscious of the cold. I had time to notice that I was climbing less precisely, a symptom of relaxed tension, and to admit ungrudgingly that nothing in the universe but Franz could have got me up to and over some of those expulsive ice bulges. Ignorant in my remote position of what the front men saw approaching above, I even thawed into a congratulatory remark or so; but I drew no response.

And then, it all ended! The gully simply petered out, not under the south-east ridge, as we might have hoped, but in the very hard heart of the diamond precipice, some 600 feet below the final and still invisible summit. The vague exit from the gully faded out against the base of a blank cliff. One of its side walls, however, led on and up to the left, under the lower rim of a big, snowy slab, sloping up like a dish-cover. The slab formed the repellent floor of a lofty, triangular recess; on its left side, and in front, space; on its right and at the back, a smooth leap of colossal cliff, soaring up for a hundred feet of crystallised shadow, to arch out dizzily above our heads in a curve like the dark underside of a cathedral dome. A more appalling-looking finish to our grim battle of ascent could hardly have been dreamed in a 'falling' nightmare, and we had not even standing room to appreciate it worthily! As I looked up and then down, I had an overpowering sense of the great grey wings behind us, shadowing suddenly close across the whole breadth of precipice and folding us off finally from the world.

But our long apprenticeship to failing hope stood us in good stead. The muscles braced anew obstinately, and the determination quickened, almost savagely. The recess on whose lip we hung had clearly been formed by the slide of a great wedge of rock slipping off the inclined slab, once its bed. The cliff on our right continued the original line, thrusting forward a sheer house end over the vanishing exit of the gully. The house corner nearest to us was vertical and iced, but a little chipped by the rending out of the wedge. The front wall of the projecting house end did not rise to the full height of the cliff that backed our recess. Forty feet up—my measures are impressions—its summit gave steeply back in a roof, receding out of sight. Presumably another huge wedge had here slid from its bed, on a higher plane, but in the same dimension horizontally as that which had left us our slab. Above and beyond this roof, the precipices rose again in the same line and to the same height as the cliffs which backed our recess. Only the cliff vertically above us was crowned by the great dome. There must be, therefore, invisible above, some rough junction or flaw where the line of cliffs above the roof linked on to the forward jut of our dome. Three vital questions suggested themselves: Could the house corner be climbed? Was the roof, if attainable, too steep to crawl up? Might there be a flawed connection where the upper end of the roof and the rise of the cliff above it, joined on to the side of the dome, and, if so, would this yield a passage out on to the face of the convex dome *above* its circle of largest dimension, on its receding upper curve, or *below* it, under its hopeless arch?

Right up in the angle of the recess there was a shallow, rotund blister of rock modelled on the face of the slab, round which a man, hunched on the small nicks in the steep incline, could just hold the rope. Josef and Franz were crouching at this blister up in the recess, the rest of us were dispersed on freezing clingholds along the lower rim of the slab, while the debate proceeded, broken by gusts of snow. The man to lead had clearly to run out 100–150 feet of rope; he could be given no protection; the most doubtful link would come some 80 feet up. If he passed that, he would be out on the convex of the dome fully 100 feet above and outside us in a perpendicular line above our heads. If he could not proceed, then a return for him was not to be thought of. Franz showed no hesitation. The hampered preparations for the attempt proceeded hurriedly. We had all to unrope as best we could to arrange for the 200 feet of possible run-out, and we hooked on to

our holds with difficulty, while the frozen rope kinked and banged venomously about us. Little J. and I had in the end to remain off the rope. Franz, climbing with extraordinary nerve, started up the corner, advancing almost imperceptibly; it was much like swarming up the corner of a tower rough-cast with ice. V—— and little J. crept up near the blister; but as there was no more room I remained hanging on to the fractured sill of the slab. In this position I was farther out, and could just see Franz' two feet scratting desperately for hold to propel him up the tilt of the roof above the corner. The rest of him was now out of sight. The minutes crawled like hours, and the rope hanging down over the gable hardly seemed to stir upwards. The snow gusts distracted us cruelly. A precipice in sunshine seems at least interested in our atom efforts; its tranquillity helps our movement by giving it a conspicuous importance. But when the stable and unstable elements join in one of their ferocious, inconclusive conflicts, the little human struggle is carelessly swallowed up in uproar, and tosses like a straw on a volcanic wave.

Suddenly came that unmistakable scrape and grit of sliding boot-nails and clothes. Above my head, over the edge of the roof to the right, I saw Franz' legs shoot out into space. Time stopped. A shiver, like expectancy, trembled across the feeling of unseen grey wings behind me, from end to end of the cliff. I realised detachedly that the swirl of the rope must sweep me from my holds before it tightened on the doubtful belay of the blister. But fate was playing out the game in regions curiously remote. The mind watched the moves, itself absorbed into the same dispassionate atmosphere unwilling to disturb the issue of formulating a thought, or even a fear. The fact of the body seemed negligible; it had no part in the observant aloofness into which all consciousness had withdrawn. Something of the same feeling of separation between the body and the watching mind is the experience of men actually falling or drowning, when action is at an end and there is not even pain to reunite bodily and mental sensation. But during the crises of this day the condition lasted, with me certainly, for spaces that could only be measured by hours.

Franz' boots again disappeared over the edge. No one in the recess had known of the slip, out of their sight and lost in the gusts. He had stopped himself miraculously on the rim by crushing his hands on to ice dimples in the slab. The rope began again to travel up the slanting gable of the roof overhanging the side of the

recess. There was a long interval and a scrabble or two of loose holds. Then the rope began, jerkily, to work out and across above our heads. Franz had found a flaw in the join of the cliffs above the roof, and was creeping out on to the projection of the dome. The lengthening rope now hung well *outside* the men in the recess, and might have hung outside me had they not held in its end. Its weight upon Franz, as it swayed down through the snow, must have added to his immense difficulties. He was far out of sight, a fly cleaving somewhere above on the face of the bulge. There was an indistinct exchange of shouts, half swallowed by echo, wind, and snow. Franz, it appeared, was still quite uncertain if he could get up any further. For the time he could hold enough to help one man, but he could not pull much. I could hear his little spurt of laughter at the question, 'If he could return?' He suggested that Josef should join him, and the rest wait until they two might return with a rescue party. Wait, there! for at best fifteen hours, hanging on to the icy holds, in a snow wind! Well, then, what if we tried to get down, and he would go on alone if he could? 'Get down? Ho, la, la!' Josef was at his wits' and his nerves' end. I suggested, pacifyingly, that V—— might join Franz, and that we three could attempt the descent together. This provoked the crisis. Every man has his cracking point. Josef's competence and control were second to none in the Alps; but the responsibility, the physical strain, and the final disappointment had snapped the cord. An outburst of wild, uneven protests—*he* go down *there* with an amateur!—ended in a frightening little outcry of some patois cradle-song. When these accidiæ occur, as they do to the best of men, the only remedy is to soothe or to startle. The first was impracticable in our situation. I spoke sharply in reproach, but without raising my voice. The experiment succeeded surprisingly. Self-control returned on the instant, and for the rest of the day he climbed and safeguarded us with all his own skill and consideration.

At this time of day, and in the condition the cliffs were now in, we could not hope to get down safely. Franz could not get back to us and might not be able to advance. We were committed to the attempt to join him, however gloomy its outlook. As many as possible must be got up, and the rest must be left to chance. Josef started his attempts on the corner. Meanwhile I moved up to V—— on the slab. He asked me, I think, what I thought were the chances of our escape. I remember considering it seriously,

and I can hear myself answering, 'About one in five.' As we talked fragmentarily, and listened to the distant scraping of Josef's feet, I noted with grim appreciation how inevitably and usefully the 'educated' man in a shipwreck or other catastrophe plays up to the occasion, for the audience of his own mind as much as for anybody else, and sustains unconsciously the part which his training dictates as the most consistent with his own dignity.

The end of the long rope hooted down past us. It hung outside the recess, dangling in air, and I could only recover it by climbing down over the end of the slab and reaching out for it with my axe. I stayed there, hanging on, as I could no longer trust hands or feet to get me up the slope again. V—— began the corner; but if I have described the position at all intelligibly, it will be seen that while the corner rose vertically on our right, the rope hung down on a parallel line from the dome directly above our heads. So it came that the higher we climbed up the corner the more horizontal became the slanting pull of the rope, and the more it tended to drag us sideways off the corner and back under the overhang. Very coolly, V—— shouted a warning before he started of the insufficient power left in frozen hands. Some twenty feet up the rope tore him from his minute, snowy holds. He swung across above our heads and hung suspended in mid air. The rope was fixed round his chest. In a minute it began to suffocate him. He shouted once or twice to the men above to hurry. Then a groan, and a fainter 'I'm done,' and he dangled apparently unconscious on the rope. Franz and Josef could only lift him half-inch by half-inch. For all this hour—probably it was longer—they were clamped one above the other on to the face of the dome, their feet on shallow but sound notches, one hand clinging on, and only the other free to pull in. Any inch the one lifted, the other held. The rough curve of the rock, over which the upper portion of the rope descended, diminished by friction the effectiveness of each tug. The more one considers it, the more superhuman do the co-operation and power the two men displayed during this time, at the end of all those hours of effort, appear. Little J. and I had only the deadly anxiety of watching, helpless, and that was enough. J. had followed silently and unselfishly the whole day; and even now he said nothing; only a tear or two of pent-up emotion fell, to freeze at once on the slab.

V—— was up at last, somehow, to the overhang, and being

dragged up the face above. A few small splinters were loosened, and fell, piping, past me and on to me. I remember calculating dully whether it was a greater risk to try and climb up back into the recess unroped and without feel in fingers and toes, or to stay where I was and chance being knocked off by a stone. It is significant of the condition of body and mind that I decided to stay where I was, where at least stiffened muscles and joints still availed to hold me mechanically fixed on to my group of rounded nicks. V—— was now out of sight and with the others. Once the constriction of the rope was removed he must have recovered amazingly toughly and at once; for down, after a short but anxious pause, whistled the snow-stiffened rope once more, so narrowly missing me that little J. cried out in alarm. I could not for a time hook it in with the axe; and while I stretched, frigidly and nervously, Josef hailed me from seemingly infinite height, his shouts travelling out on the snow eddies: They could not *possibly* pull up my greater weight; unless I could stick on to the corner and climb round to them, it was useless trying! At last I had fished in the rope with a thrill of relief, and I set mental teeth. With those two tied on to the rope above, and myself tied on in the way I meant to tie myself on, to the rope below, there were going to be no more single options. We were all in it together; and if I had still some faith in myself I had yet more in that margin of 'desperation' strength which extends the 'possible' indefinitely for such men as I knew to be linked on to me above. And if I were once up, well, there would be no question about little J. coming up too!

I gave hands and feet a last blue-beating to restore some feeling. Then I knotted the rope round my chest, made the end into a triple-bowline 'chair' round the thighs, and began scratching rather futilely upon the icy rectangular corner. For the first twenty-five feet—or was it less?—I could just force upward. Then the rope began to drag me off inexorably. I clutched furiously up a few feet more; and then I felt I must let go, the pull was too strong for frozen fingers. As I had already resolved, at the last second I kicked off from the rock with all my strength. This sent me flying out on the rope, under the overhang, as if attached to a crazy pendulum. I could see J. crouching in the recess far below, instinctively protecting his head. The impetus jumped the upper part of the rope off its cling to the rock face of the dome, and enabled them to snatch in a foot or two; and the

return swing brought me back, as I had half hoped, against the corner, a little higher up. I gripped it with fingers and teeth, and scrambled up another few feet. But the draw was now irresistible. I kicked off again; gained a foot or so, and spun back. I was now high enough to have been by rights scrambling on the roof on the far side of my gable edge. But the rope, if nothing else, prevented any chance of getting over so far to the right. Another cling and scratch up the corner and I was not far below the level of the dome overhanging above and to my left. For the last time I fell off. But this time the free length of the rope, below its hold up the curve of the dome, was too short to allow of a return swing. So I shot out passively, to hang, revolving slowly, under the dome, with the feeling that my part was at an end. When I spun round inward, I looked up at the reddish scarred wall, freckled with snow, and at the tense rope, looking thin as a grey cobweb, and disappearing frailly over the forespring of rock that arched greedily over my head. When I spun outward, I looked down—no matter how many thousand feet—to the dim, shifting lines of the glacier at the foot of the peak, hazy through the snowfall; and I could see, well inside my feet, upon the face of the precipice the little white triangle of the recess and the duller white dot of J.'s face as he crouched by the blister. It flashed across me, absurdly, that he ought to be more anxious about the effect of my gymnastics upon the fragile thread of alpine rope, his one link with hope, than about me!

I was quite comfortable in the chair; but the spinning had to be arrested. I reached out the axe at full stretch, and succeeded in touching the cliff back under the overhang. This stopped me, face inward. I heard inarticulate shouting above, and guessed its meaning, although I was now too close under the dome to catch the words: 'They could not lift my dead weight!' I bethought me and stretched out the axe again, got its point against a wrinkle of the wall, and pushed out. This started me swinging straight out and in below the dome. After two pokes I swung in near enough to be able to give a violent, short-armed thrust against the cliff. It carried me out far enough to jump quite a number of feet of rope clear of its cling down the face of the orb above. The guides took advantage of the easing to haul in, and I pendulumed back a good foot higher. The cliff was now beginning to spring out in the Gothic arch of the overhang, so it could be reached more easily. I repeated the shove out more desperately. Again they hauled in on the

easing rope. This time I came back close under the arch, and choosing a spot as I swung in, I lifted both feet, struck them at the wall, and gave a convulsive upward and outward spring. The rope shortened up; and as I banged back the cornice loomed nearer above my head. But the free length of rope below it was now too short to let me again reach to the back of the arch with leg or axe. I hung, trying in vain to touch the lowest moulding of the cornice above with my hands. I heard gasps and grunts above quite distinctly now. The rope strained and creaked, gritting over the edge of the rock above me. I felt the tremor of the sinews heaving on it. But for all that, I did not move up. I reached up with the axe in both hands, just hooked the pick into a lucky chink of the under-moulding, and pulled, with a frantic wriggle of the whole body. It was a feeble lift, but enough for the sons of Anak above to convert into a valuable gain. The axe slipped down on to my shoulder, held by its sling; I reached up and back with both arms, got hold of a finger grip, and gained another inch. Infinitesimal inches they seemed, each a supreme effort, until my nose and chin scratched up against a fillet of the overhang. Then the arms gave out completely, so much at the end of their strength that they dropped lifeless. But the teeth of the upper jaw held on a broken spillikin and, with the stronger succour of the rope, supported me for the seconds while the blood was running back. Wrestle by wrestle it went on; every reserve of force exhausted, but the impulse now supplied by a flicker of hope, until, at last, my knee caught over a moulding on the edge, and I could sink forward for an instant's rest, with rough clothes clinging over the rough, steep, upward but *backward* curving of the dome. It is impossible to suggest the relief of feeling that the only solid surface which still kept one in touch with existence had ceased to thrust itself out for ever as a barrier above the head, and was actually giving back in semi-support below the feet.

But there was no time, or inclination, to indulge panting humanity with a rest or a realisation. I crept up a few feet, on to minute, brittle, but sufficient crinkles. The dark figures of the three above were visible now, clinging crab-like and exhausted on to similar nicks, indistinct in the snow dusk, but still human company. I had to stay where I was and unrope, making a coil at the end of its heavy length so that I could swing it inward to little J. back and far beneath me in the recess. Then I let it go for those above to hold; and it writhed away from me across the

few visible feet of stooping crag as J. below moved away to start the icy corner. He had, I think, two extra sacks and at least three axes slung on to him; but he grappled up the corner superbly and forced his way out on to the roof. Hopeless of lifting him as they had lifted us, the men above had learned, from pure fatigue, to leave him more free upon the rope. But he was naturally a very long time; and there was all too much leisure in which to realise how irrevocably our descent was now cut off, and how improbably our ascent could be continued.

The first flare of blinding relief died down. The obscure future settled round again like a fog. The precipice receding into murky uncertainty above looked more than ever dark with discouragement for a vitality ebbing on the tide of reaction. The shadowy, humping figures above were silent; there was none of that heartening talk that greets us over a difficult edge, giving assurance that the worst is past. With no longer even the rope as a reminder of companionship the sense that others were near in like case passed out of consciousness. The mind wandered drowsily and all the life of the body seemed suspended, as we feel it to be sometimes in the moments just preceding sleep.

The snow began to fall in large, soft flakes; not the tingling darts that assail us with the crisp hostility of intruders upon our alien earth, but like wings, instinct with life, welcoming a visitor to their own region of air with vague but insistent friendliness. A few flakes settled inquisitively, to gleam and fade for a second like fallen star-light, on the short arc of brown crag racing into shadow between my feet. The rest drifted lightly and recklessly down past my heels, to disappear over the rim of void, suggesting how easy and restful might be the descent could the limbs but be persuaded to relax their tenacious hold upon the few remaining feet of inhospitable rock. Far below and to the right a brow of frosted precipice frowned into sight, and against and round its familiar obstruction, lit by a pale glare diffused through the low clouds, the idle flakes twirled and circled intimately, already forgetful of their more timid flight past the stranger above. When they sank from it, it was into an evening immensity of grey haze, featureless but for the black ribbons of moraine that floated high and distinct above their unseen glaciers, as reeds sway and float high over the reflecting depths of a transparent stream. Into these immeasurable grey depths everything seemed to descend, unresisting and as of choice: the long lines of ice-fast crag, the

shifting vistas of dancing snow, the leaden plunge of metallic storm-lights, even the eye and the tired mind. Some rebellious instinct of hand and foot alone seemed to defy a universal law.

The continual movement of the snow spread to the rock. We must all have felt, when we look up at overhanging cliffs, how they lean out, rushingly, above us, and yet never visibly stir; as if their furious motion were not in space but through some other dimension. The same sensation came as I clung on to the rough, short bow of rock islanded in the sky. The dome swayed out and out perpetually, and yet did not move for sight or touch. Not common 'giddiness'; my eyes held the crags as firmly in place as my feet and hands were holding me. Then the movement became general; an impetuous hurtling across the sky, which yet left heights and depths in their fixed relation to one another. And imagination conjectured and interpreted that this must be the spin of the earth, perceptible upon one of its pre-eminent spires.

Back, with a slight shock, came the realisation of the loneliness, of the long fight and of its almost inevitable end. The purpose to battle the remainder of it out inch by inch needed no reinforcement; so thought could leave that to itself and wander further afield. In the moments of death the mind appears sometimes to be anticipating its separation, to be already moving through an environment of sensation so removed from our own that human emotions do not touch its consciousness or even recall its compassion. To have waited through moments that were as a lifetime of such experience, when the ending of the personality, with all its consequences for others, had been contemplated and accepted, and the mind had journeyed many long miles beyond among impressions that have no equivalent in speech, could not leave anyone who has emerged from the experience unchanged. Men who survived the weeks of dedication to 'services of special danger' in the war could give better account. But there is a sombre brooding in the erect lines of great cliffs as they withdraw themselves under shadow or snow that banishes every cheer of chance from the moment when we realise in the silence that all further reassuring action is finally denied to us.

The appearance of little J., as he clambered, a clattering goblin, over a boss on the dome, brought back the world of fact, and company, and struggle. The day was darkening steadily—or is my memory of darkness only the shadow of our circumstance?

for it was not yet four o'clock—but the snow stopped, having done its worst where it could most impede us. We roped up patiently and began again our age-long crawl and halt up icy slabs as little friendly as before; and every fifty feet above us loomed still the threat of a total interruption. We had none of us, I think, consciousness left for anything more than hanging on and forcing up. In my own case—and a truthful record of sensation limits me to thinking only of myself—the capacity to feel or to remark was exhausted. Franz must have been far more nervously alert, for he ground out a devious upward line through the angry upheaving of giant slabs without hitch or false attempt. I can recall no details. Still no message of hope reached us from above; and yet we must have left another 400 feet of rib and crack, snow-ice and doubtful holds below us. Even imagination dared not whisper to itself of the summit: the next five feet, and still the next five feet was the end of all effort and expectation.

And then, something was happening! There came a low mutter of talk from the dusk above: surely two shadows were actually moving at one time! I was at the foot of a long, icy trough, slanting up to the right; overhung by cliff on its left, as usual; falling away into space on its right, as usual; with the usual absence of any holds to keep me in it. I began the eternal knee-friction crawl. The rope tightened on my waist. 'Shall I pull?' called Josef's voice, sounding strange after the hours of silence, and subdued to a monotone as if he feared that the peak might still hear and wake up to contrive some new devilment. 'Why not?—if you really can!' I echoed, full of surprise and hope; and I skimmered up the trough to find Josef yoked to a royal rock belay, the third and the best of the day! And, surely, we were standing on the crest of a great ridge, materialised as by magic out of the continuous darkness of cliff and sky? And the big, sullen shadow just above must be the summit! It *was* the mounting edge of the south-east ridge; and sixty feet above us it curled up on to the top of the final pyramid. Josef unroped from me, while I brought up little J.; and as we started to finish together in our inseparable partnership, the silhouettes of the other three passed in succession over the pointed sky-line of the peak.

We found them, sprawling in cramped attitudes on the summit slab, swallowing sardines and snow, our first food since 7.30 in the morning. It was now close upon six o'clock. Franz came across to meet me and shake hands. 'You will never do anything

harder than that, Franz!' 'No,' he said reflectively, 'man could not do much more.'

The end of the story follows the usual route down hill as easily as we did; and it must hurry down those ten thousand feet as quickly. Little J. and I raced down the snow slopes ahead, with the advantage of being only two. Darkness caught us as we reached the moraine at the end of the Kien Glacier. We searched separately for the then new Kien Hut to shelter in for the night. J. found the track to it, but Franz had dashed on, and we were all too far below to make it wise to recall us. We struggled and tumbled down through the precipitous woods, vainly seeking for the subtle evasions of the old Randa path. The candle lamps proved, as always, consolatory but ineffective. I believe I found the track first, falling headlong down a bank of pine-roots and alighting on the abrupt surprise of a horizontal surface, which, on lower alps at night, is the surest indication that we have hit the path.

Into Randa we trudged at half an hour before midnight, for a genuine meal. And then, leaving the guides to sleep, and to forget all but the greatness of their exploit, V—— and I started again and tramped the long historic miles up to Zermatt. At a quarter past three we began our last dinner and our first breakfast, rounding off a circle of sensations that lasted twenty-six hours in time, and left some impressions as deeply graven as those of the five whole later years of war.

Since then, Josef, great guide and good comrade, has left us. The incomparable Franz and my own unique little J., I rejoice to think, still head the glorious band of San Niklaus guides. But the Täsch-horn, by the south face, has not been reascended.

G. Winthrop Young.

# *DR. JOHNSON AND SECOND SIGHT.*

BY EDWARD CLODD.

In the first edition of his 'Dictionary,' the phenomenon known as Second Sight is defined by Dr. Johnson as 'the power of seeing things future or things distant, supposed inherent in some of the Scottish islands.' More precisely stated, it is a faculty by which the person so gifted is said to be able to see future events and objects at a distance as though they were actually present, also to hear voices, as the wailings and screechings of the fairy Banshee, which betoken coming evil or death. What goes locally by the name of second sight is generally known as clairvoyance, literally 'clear-seeing,' and is not special to any age or race. It is in the remoter parts of the British Isles—in secluded districts where the pickaxe of the navvy has not scared away the 'good people' of fairydom—that primitive ideas and customs survive; hence belief in the actuality of second sight is still found lurking in the Highlands and in the islands of the west coast of Scotland. The Gaelic name for it—*da-shealladh*—means, not 'the second sight' but 'two sights,' one of the world of sense which everyone possesses, and the other of the world of spirits, through which are perceived ghosts, fetches, doubles, spectres, *et hoc genus omne*. This world of spirits, as manifest to the individual who has the gift of second sight, does not embrace the great company of angels and archangels who intermittently appear to favoured mortals, to starved saints and neurotic women, usually nuns, and, more rarely, to give proof of their existence when defeat threatens the side they favour, as in the celestial arrows with which they pierced the bodies of German soldiers at the battle of Mons.[1] To the second-sighter his blood-

[1] Concerning this monstrous legend, outcome of an ingenious fiction invented by Mr. Arthur Machen, the Rev. Samuel Chadwick, President of the Wesleyan Conference, says: 'I am certain Angels were at Mons—that there were unseen mighty forces that saved our men.' And he has a host of followers, whose credulity, despite numerous accounts, old and new, of the same nature, nothing can shake. 'The astonished fancy of the multitude,' says Gibbon (chap. xx) 'has sometimes given shape and colour, language and motion, to the fleeting but uncommon meteors of the air.' Nine years after Constantine's great victory 'Nazarius describes an army of divine warriors who seemed to fall from the sky' and rush to the assistance of the Emperor. At the battle of Beder (A.D. 624) the fancy

relations and friends reveal themselves in recognised form and feature. The phantasms being to him external realities, and no subjective impressions, there is begotten the crude and fantastic psychology which creates belief in an *alter ego*, a second self, which has further support from the phenomena of shadows, reflections, and echoes; all alike witnessing, in barbaric conception, to a dual personality. But if the fabled six-limbed monstrosities, in whose actual existence persons ignorant of angelology as a branch of mythology, believe, lie outside the sweep of the double-seers, these are given admission to the kingdom of the fairies, whence less favoured mortals are excluded. There was written in 1691 a quaint tract entitled 'The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies,' the author of which was one Rev. Mr. Kirk of Aberfoyle. It was not printed until 1815, the original having lain in MS. in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. Sir Walter Scott made use of it in his 'Demonology and Witchcraft.' Mr. Kirk, who, at his death, became, according to tradition, 'a captive in Fairyland,' thus describes the dwellers therein as double-seers:

'They are clearly seen by these men of the Second Sight to eat at Funerals and Banquets; hence many of the Scottish-Irish will not taste Meat at these Meithings lest they have Communion with, or be poysoned by, them. So are they seen to carrie the Beer or Coffin with the Corps among the midle-Earth Men to the Grave. Some Men of the Exalted Sight (either by Art or Nature) have told me they have seen at these Meithings a Doubleman, or the Shape of some Man in two places, that is, a superterranean and a subterranean Inhabitant perfectly resembling one another in all Points, whom he notwithstanding could easily distinguish one from another by some secret Tokens and Operations, and so speak to the Man his Neighbour and Familiar, passing by the Apparition or Resemblance of him' (p. 9).

Whether visual or auditory, the apparitions manifest to these men of the second sight are usually promonitory of death: the

of the Koreish beheld the angelic warriors, 'whereat they trembled and fled before the army of Mahomet' (Gibbon, chap. l). In the recent campaign, our generals followed the example of the Theodosius, who, 'as the angels protecting the Catholic cause were visible only to the eyes of faith, prudently reinforced those heavenly legions with the more effectual aid of temporal and carnal weapons.' (Gibbon, chap. xxvii).

For further stories of supernatural beings rendering aid in battles, see II *Maccabees* v. 2–3; North's *Plutarch* (Themistocles); Frazer's *Golden Bough*, 'Magic Art,' vol. i. p. 49, and Parish's *Hallucinations*, pp. 308–311.

certainty of that event explains the more frequent association. One of the earliest references in this matter is given in the 'Polychronicon' of Ranulf Higden, a document dated about 1387. He says:

'There oft by daye tyme, men of that islonde [probably one of the Hebrides] seen men that being dede to forehande, byheaded or hole, and what dethe they deyde. Alyeus setten theyr feet upon feet of the men of that londe, for to see such syghtes as the men of that londe doon.'

The quotation is from Dalyell's 'Darker Superstitions of Scotland,' p. 481.

The symbolic form of apparition has examples in the shape of boding animals, chiefly black dogs, funerals and phantoms, death or corpse-candles lighting the road along which the procession to the grave will pass; sounds of coffins being made and sights of phantoms carrying the wood and nails needed for the work. But the most frequent prognostic of death was the shroud, and the nearness or the remoteness of that event was judged by the extent to which the body was swathed in the ominous cerecloth. And the second-sighters had their time-table. The earlier the hour, the farther-off was death, the later in the day, the sooner the death.[1] If drowning was to be the fate of the person seen, phosphorescent gleams, such as are common in the Hebridean seas on summer nights, appeared round the figure, or its clothes seemed to drip, or there was water in its shoes.

I may quote in this connection the stanzas from Rossetti's 'King's Tragedy' wherein he makes use of the superstition. To James the First of Scots, seated in the Blackfriars' Charterhouse of Perth, comes a woman tattered and old:

> But it seemed as though by a fire within
> Her withern limbs were wrung.
> And as soon as the King was close to her,
> She stood up gaunt and strong.
> And the woman held his eyes with her eyes:—
> O King, thou art come at last,
> But thy wraith has haunted the Scottish Sea
> To my sight for four years past.

[1] Life goes out with the ebb. 'Barkis is willing. And it being low water he went out with the tide.'

Four years it is since first I met
'Twixt the Duchroy and the Dhu,
A shape whose feet clung close in a shroud,
And the shape for *thine* I knew.
A year again, and on Inchkeith Isle
I saw thee pass in the breeze,
With the cerecloth risen above thy feet
And wound about thy knees.

. . . . . .

And in this hour I find thee here,
And well my eyes may note
That the winding-sheet hath passed thy breast
And risen around thy throat.
And when I meet thee again, O King,
That of death has such sore drouth—
Except thou turn again on this shore—
The winding-sheet shall have moved once more
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

These second-sighters came under the laws against witchcraft, the most notorious prosecutors being the Scotch clergy of the seventeenth century, whose infamies rival the cruelties of Torquemada. In his 'Darker Superstitions of Scotland' Dalyell reports cases where the 'second sicht' forms an item in the indictment, and led to the hanging or burning of the unhappy victims of bigotry and superstition. 'There is nothing so dangerous as the religious conscience' is the apt paraphrase of Lucretius's terrible words—'*tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*'—which Mr. Masson gives in his book on the immortal poem.[1]

The references to second sight in Boswell's 'Life of Johnson'[2] are few and far between; only two occur prior to the tour of the two friends to the Hebrides. They are as follows. In February 1766, Boswell says:

'I introduced the subject of second sight, and other mysterious manifestations, the fulfilment of which, I suggested, might happen by chance.'

JOHNSON: 'Yes, Sir, but they have happened so often, that mankind have agreed to think them not fortuitous.' (Vol. ii. p. 10.)

The next reference bears date March 21, 1772.

[1] *Lucretius: Epicurean and Poet*, p. 436.

[2] The quotations throughout this paper are from Dr. Birkbeck Hill's edition.

'We drank tea with Mrs. Williams, who told us a story of second sight, which happened in Wales, where she was born. He listened to it very attentively and said he should be glad to have some instances of that faculty well authenticated. His elevated wish for more and more evidence for spirit, in opposition to the grovelling belief of materialism, led him to a love of such mysterious disquisitions . . . I mentioned to him that Macaulay told me he was advised to leave out of his book ['History of St. Kilda'] the wonderful story that upon the approach of a stranger all the inhabitants catch cold; but that it had been so well authenticated he determined to retain it.'

JOHNSON: 'Sir, to leave things out of a book, merely because people tell you they will not be believed, is meanness. Macaulay acted with more magnanimity.' (Vol. ii. p. 150.)

On page 52 of the same volume, Boswell records the explanation given by his friend, 'the late Reverend Mr. Christian, of Docking,' that a ship can approach St. Kilda only when a north-easter is blowing.

In the opening words of his 'Journey to the Western Islands,' Johnson says:

'I had desired to visit the Hebrides or Western Islands of Scotland, so long, that I scarcely remember how the wish was originally excited.'

Quoting this, Boswell says:

'He told me, in summer 1763, that his father put Martin's account into his hands when very young, and that he was much pleased with it.' (Vol. v. p. 13.)

The full title of this book is 'A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland.' By Martin Martin. It was published in 1703, six years before Johnson was born. In the first volume of the 'Life' (p. 430) Boswell has more to say. Johnson told him that 'he was highly pleased' with Martin's book,

'that he was particularly struck with the St. Kilda man's notion that the high church of Glasgow had been hollowed out of a rock; a circumstance to which old Mr. Johnson had directed his attention. He said he would go to the Hebrides with me when I returned from my travels, unless some very good companion should offer when I was absent, which he did not think probable; adding, there are few people to whom I take so much as to you.'

A footnote to Vol. v. p. 13, tells us that the copy of Martin's book, which is in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, was the very one 'which accompanied Mr. Samuel Johnson and me (i.e. Boswell) in our tour to the Hebrides.'

'Martin was not a man illiterate,' Johnson says in the 'Journey' (p. 101). In proof of this, Martin had taken his M.A. degree at Edinburgh University in 1681, and subsequently achieved a certain repute as an antiquarian. Johnson, in further comment upon him, says: 'No man now writes so ill as Martin's "Account of the Hebrides" is written' (iii. p. 243), and otherwise does scant justice to his book. He charges him with failure to record 'uncouth customs that are now disused and wild opinions that prevail no longer.' ('Journey,' p. 101.) He makes no reference to the full accounts of the second sight which Martin gives, nor to his careful classification of special visions which Defoe utilised in his 'Life and Adventures of Duncan Campbell,' the deaf and dumb quack and fortune-teller, whose adventures afforded Defoe congenial material. Martin has no explanation of the phenomenon to offer; he is the simple narrator. Turning to the 'Journey,' Johnson records an entertaining visit to Ostig in Skye, of which parish Mr. McPherson was minister. It was there, Boswell tells us in his 'Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,' that Johnson enquired if there were any remains of the second sight. To this there is no reference in the 'Journey.'

'Mr. McPherson said he was *resolved* not to believe it, because it was founded on no principle.'

JOHNSON: 'There are many things then, which we are sure are true, that you will not believe. What principle is there why a loadstone attracts iron? why an egg produces a chicken by heat? why a tree grows upwards, when the natural tendency of all things is downwards? Sir, it depends upon the degree of evidence you have.'[1]

'Young Mr. McKinnon mentioned one McKenzie who is still alive, who had often fainted in his presence and when he recovered, mentioned visions which had been presented to him. He told Mr. McKinnon that at such a place he should meet a funeral, and that such and such people would be the bearers, naming four, and three weeks afterwards he saw what McKenzie had predicted.'

[1] McPherson's argument was not refuted by Johnson in these interrogations. In all occult phenomena no scientific principles are applicable: the experiential cannot be submitted to the experimental.

Boswell's comment on this is that 'the facts were not related with sufficient accuracy.' (He has a heap of loose imitators who, in the present day, use the word 'fact' where they mean 'statement.') Then, he adds:

'Mrs. McKinnon told us that her father was one day riding in Skye and some women, who were at work in a field, said to him they had heard two *taiscks* (that is, two voices of persons about to die), and what was remarkable, one of them was an English *taisck*, which they had never heard before. When he returned, he at that very place met two funerals, and one of them was that of a woman who had come from the mainland, and could only speak English.' (Vol. v. pp. 159, 160.)

What Johnson may have said is not reported.

Crossing to Raasay the next day (September 8) Johnson's spurs were lost overboard, whereupon he recalled a dream the night before that he had dropped his staff into a river.

'So now you see [said he] that I have lost my spurs, and this story is better than many of those which we have concerning second sight and dreams.'

His host, the Rev. Mr. M'Queen,

'said that he did not believe in second sight; that he never met with any well-attested instances, and if he should, he should impute them to chance; because all who pretend to that quality often fail in their predictions.' (Vol. v. p. 164.)

The minister then spoke of the belief in witchcraft as very common; here again, Boswell gives no report of Johnson's conversation. But under date of September 19, he says:

'I omitted to mention in its place that Dr. Johnson told Mr. M'Queen that he found the belief in the second sight universal in Skye, except among the clergy, who seemed determined against it.' (Vol. v. p. 227.)

Staying with a Mr. M'Quarrie in the island of Ulva, Boswell says:

'He told us a strong instance of the second sight. He had gone to Edinburgh and taken a manservant with him. An old woman, who was in the house, said one day, "M'Quarrie will be at home to-morrow and will bring two gentlemen with him," and she said she saw his servant return in red and green. He did come home next day. He had two gentlemen with him and his servant had a new red and green livery which M'Quarrie had bought for him

at Edinburgh, not having the least intention when he left home to put his servant in livery, so that the old woman could not have heard any previous mention of it. This, he assured us, was a true story.' (Vol. v. p. 320.)

Under date of November 10, 1773, Boswell has some discursive observations on second sight, confessing that the

'considerable degree of faith in that phenomenon which he brought back from the Hebrides has been much weakened by reflecting on the careless inaccuracy of narrative in common matters.' (Vol. v. p. 390.)

But here we are not concerned with Boswell's credulity or scepticism, and, as another reference shows, his gullibility at last prevailed. In February 1775, Boswell's friend, George Dempster, thanking him for a copy of Johnson's 'Journey to the Western Islands,' says :

'He reasons candidly about the *second sight*, but I wish he had enquired more before he ventured to say he even doubted of the possibility of such an unusual and useless deviation from all the known laws of nature. The notion of the second sight I consider as a remnant of superstitious ignorance and credulity which a philosopher will set down as such till the contrary is clearly proved, and then it will be classed among the other certain, though unaccountable, parts of our nature-like dream and—I do not know what.' (Vol. v. p. 407.)

On March 24, 1775, Boswell met Johnson at the Literary Club. He records as follows :

'Before he came in we talked of his "Journey to the Western Islands" and of his coming away "willing to believe" in the second sight, which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with the truth of many of the stories of it which I had been told that I avowed my conviction, saying, He is only *willing* to believe: I *do* believe. The evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief.' 'Are you ? [said Colman] then cork it up.' (Vol. ii. p. 318.)

Like the majority of people past, present and probably through all future time, Boswell did not act on the aphorism known as 'Occam's razor' : *Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*, in free rendering, i.e. Presume not a miracle until natural causes have been excluded.[1] From such reference in the literature of

[1] *Cf.* Hamilton's *Law of Parsimony*, which forbids us to postulate unknown causes where known causes can account for the phenomenon.

the period as I have been able to glean, it would appear that the phenomenon of second sight caused no widespread discussion in Johnson's time. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1777, pp. 111, 112, an anonymous contributor quotes as follows from Dr. Beattie's 'Essay on Truth,' published in 1770:

'I do not find sufficient evidence for the reality of second sight. . . . That any of these visionaries are liable to be swayed in their declamations by sinister views, I will not say, though a gentleman of character assured me that one of them offered to sell this unaccountable talent for half a crown. But this I think may be said with confidence, that none but ignorant people pretend to be gifted in this way . . . for it is admitted, even by the most credulous Highlanders, that as knowledge and industry are propagated in their country, the second sight disappears in proportion, and nobody ever laid claim to this faculty who was much employed in the intercourse of social life. . . . As to the prophetic nature of this second sight, it cannot be admitted at all. That the deity should work a miracle in order to give intimation of the frivolous things that these tales are made up of, the arrival of a stranger, the nailing of a coffin, or the colour of a suit of clothes . . . can only be regarded as absurd and incredible. The visions, such as they are, may reasonably enough be ascribed to a distempered fancy.'

It would nowadays be bringing 'owls to Athens' to comment at length on a phenomenon which takes its place in the history of hallucinations visual, auditory or wholly subjective as, e.g. in the case of the sufferer from peritonitis, who declared that a Church Congress was being held inside her; or of the paralytic who, persistently constipated, imagined that he was pregnant with the child of the Grand Duke of Baden, and who insisted on instant delivery; or of the demented invalid who declared that his left leg had turned Protestant and who, refusing to put it under the bed-clothes, insisted on its amputation. The doctor wisely called in the priest, whose white magic brought back the leg to the true faith, whereupon the man recovered. Consider, for a moment, this mental apparatus that can play such tricks, befooling us. The primary source of all ideas is in the impressions conveyed from without by the senses to the brain. This marvellous organ is built up of thousands of millions of cells or neurons which, unlike the body-cells, cannot be replaced if destroyed, but which, otherwise, last the entire life of the individual. Into these cells, to be by them stored-up, pass not only the countless impressions of which, recalled by memory, we are conscious, but also impressions of

which we are unaware, making-up what is called the subliminal or under-the-threshold consciousness. And as the larger number of impressions are those which the optic nerve receives and transmits, visual hallucinations are the more common. Abnormal states produce abnormal effects: they are an index to a morbid condition of that intricate, delicately-poised structure, the nervous system, under which objects are seen and sensations felt; the mental becomes the visual, an imagined pain a real pain. These abnormal states may be due to organic or only functional causes; organic, where there is disease; or functional, leading the dyspeptic, as Hood says, to 'think he's pious when he's only bilious.' Hence no very deep study of mental pathology is needed to show what illusions and sensations may be created by the power of suggestion and by the concentration of thought, predisposition being half-way to fulfilment; nor to show what abnormal phenomena the repression or undue excitation of the emotions in persons of morbid temperament or low mentality will bring about.

Neither of these unwholesome workings of the mind need be suggested as explanation of the robust Johnson's willingness to believe in second sight. Sufficing reason for that belief are supplied by his temperament and surroundings. He was a devout Christian; he accepted the Bible as, in his own words, 'a positive revelation' (Vol. iii. p. 317); he looked for salvation through the atoning merits of Christ as a Divine being; he was instant in prayer. When attending on Good Friday 1773 at Saint Clement Danes with Johnson, Boswell says: 'I never shall forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the Litany: "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgement, Good Lord, deliver us."' Although his vigorous common sense enabled him to pierce through the imposture of the Cock Lane Ghost, 'he admitted the influence of evil spirits upon our minds, and said, "Nobody who believes the New Testament can deny it."' (Vol. iv. p. 290.) Talking of ghosts, he said to Boswell:

'It is wonderful that 5000 years have now elapsed since the creation of the world [Archbishop Ussher's chronology then held the field] and still it is undecided whether or not there has ever been an instance of the spirit of any person appearing after death. All argument is against it, but all belief is for it.' (Vol. iii. p. 230.)

Could he have been present at any *séance* I think that he would have been among the first to have seized on the wig and muslin and phosphorised oil by which the modern medium produces the

materialised spirit, yet he lent an ear to Cave's story that he had seen a ghost, which is described as 'something of a shadowy being' (Vol. ii. p. 178), and the flimsiest arguments on which telepathy is based might gather a specious support from his assertion that one day, at Oxford, when his mother was at Lichfield, 'he heard her distinctly call, "*Sam.*"' (Vol. iv. p. 94.)

But Johnson's mind was not cast in any speculative mould. To his own satisfaction he settled the endless dispute on the question of Determinism and Freewill by the *obiter dictum*, 'Sir, we know our will is free and there's an end on't.' (Vol. ii. p. 82.) Contrast with this the irrefutable argument of Spinoza that 'our feeling of free will is but ignorance of the causes that make us act,' and of Huxley that the *onus probandi* lies on the defenders of the doctrine of free will who contend that 'whatever may be the fixity of order of the universe of things, that of thought is given over to chance.'[1] Johnson thought that he had given a fatal kick to Berkeley's theory of the non-reality of the external world by 'striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone till he rebounded from it, saying, 'I reject it thus.' He was wholly incapable of dealing with Huxley's *eirenicon* to the contending materialists and idealists that it is

'in itself of little moment whether we express the phenomena of matter in terms of spirit, or the phenomena of spirit in terms of matter; matter may be regarded as a form of thought, thought may be regarded as a property of matter—each statement has a relative truth.'[2]

On the phenomenon in which Johnson was 'willing to believe' the great philosopher to whom, in his actual presence, he refused to be introduced, wrote thus:

'The late President Forbes was a believer in the second sight, and I make no question but he could, on a month's warning, have overpowered you with evidence in its favour. But as finite added to finite never approaches a hair's breadth nearer to the infinite, so a statement incredible in itself acquires not the smallest accession of probability by the accumulation of testimony.'[3]

[1] *Hume*, p. 221. [2] *Methods and Results*, p. 164.
[3] Burton's *Life of Hume*, vol. i. p. 480.

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# BOOK - NOTES

Sir Ronald Ross has proved that high distinction in the practical world of science is not incompatible with success in the spheres of drama and of thoughtful poetry. His muse has ideas. In THE REVELS OF ORSERA (7*s.* net) he proves the possession also of the gift of imaginative romance; and on a spacious canvas depicts in colours that glow a story of passionate love and of changed personalities. Zozimo, the dwarf, deformed in body and warped in mind, loves the lady Letitia; and, through a spiritual bargain, has his choice. How the theme works out must be left to Sir Ronald, who uses to purpose the gifts of a great descriptive faculty and a rich orchestra of words.

This year is the two-hundredth anniversary of the sailing of the "Mayflower," for it was in September 1620 that the Pilgrim Fathers set out from Plymouth. Extensive arrangements for Commemoration Celebrations have been made by the Mayflower Council, and many Americans are making the journey to Plymouth to take part in them. The present, therefore, is a particularly appropriate time for the appearance of THE INFLUENCE OF PURITANISM ON THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF THE ENGLISH, by the Rev. Canon J. S. Flynn, Vicar of St. John's, Hove. It is an appreciation of Puritanism without condoning its defects, showing how it has shaped the course of politics both in this country and in America. Canon Flynn maintains that through all its chequered history, Puritanism has, on the whole, been the guardian of Freedom and the champion of Righteousness, and is still the most living moral force amongst the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the world.

Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, whose "Introductory History of England" at once placed him amongst the foremost of present-day historians, and inspired a great deal of the recent improvement in the teaching of history, has written a brief sketch of the principal events of the war on the various British fronts. THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918, is, as was only to be expected in a book by Mr. Fletcher, no dry-as-dust chronicle, but a living story, written in a vivid and interesting style.

Captain Kermit Roosevelt, the eldest son of the late Theodore Roosevelt, had the good fortune to serve on two fronts during the war, under both the British and American flags. In the East he was with General Allenby and also on the staff of General Maude, and his book, WAR IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN (10*s.* 6*d.* net), is largely a record of that eventful and dramatic campaign. It also includes a brief account of the closing months on the Western front in France. A feature of the book that renders it doubly interesting is the series of unusual photographs. It will be remembered that Captain Roosevelt accompanied his father on both his African and South American trips, and the wonderful pictures in those narratives were taken by him.

The ominous phrase, " nervous breakdown," is painfully familiar in these days. A book that should prove helpful to all victims of nerve troubles, by one who knows what the thing means, and also has had exceptional opportunities of meeting and dealing with others who know, is provided in NERVES AND THE MAN, a Popular Psychological and Constructive Study, by W. Charles Loosmore, M.A. (6*s.* net). Mr. Loosmore writes, not as a medical expert, but as a practical psychologist. He gives his own experiences, and describes the palliative and resistive means which have been found helpful and successful in his own case.

The Theatre is recovering after the slough of revue and inconsequence into which it fell during recent years; and it is natural that comment upon the past, present, and future of the Drama in England should now be forthcoming. In THE CONTEMPORARY DRAMA OF ENGLAND (7*s.* 6*d.* net) Mr. Thomas H. Dickinson traces the growth of things theatrical from 1866, when they began to " boom," through all the various " styles " that waxed and waned down to the " lively nineties " and the beginning of the present century. He describes the various phases, from the adaptations from the French and German, to the war that waged over Ibsen, and later over Shaw; the privately produced plays that evaded the censorship, and the regular productions that aroused public criticism. Mr. Dickinson brings his book to a close with an account of the productions of Gordon Craig, Max Reinhardt, and Granville Barker.

Under the title of THE SLIPPERY SLOPE will appear shortly a valuable collection of Essays, by the late W. A. Bailward, M.A., on what undoubtedly is one of the most difficult problems of Local Government—the administration of the Poor Laws. It is a work of unquestioned authority, based on the experience of twenty-five years in a poor district of London, during which period Mr. Bailward gave a great deal of time, labour, and research to Poor-law and Charity Organisation work. Though dealing with subjects which are too often considered " dry " by the general reader, Mr. Bailward handles them with such lightness and even brilliancy of touch that there is not a dull line in the book.

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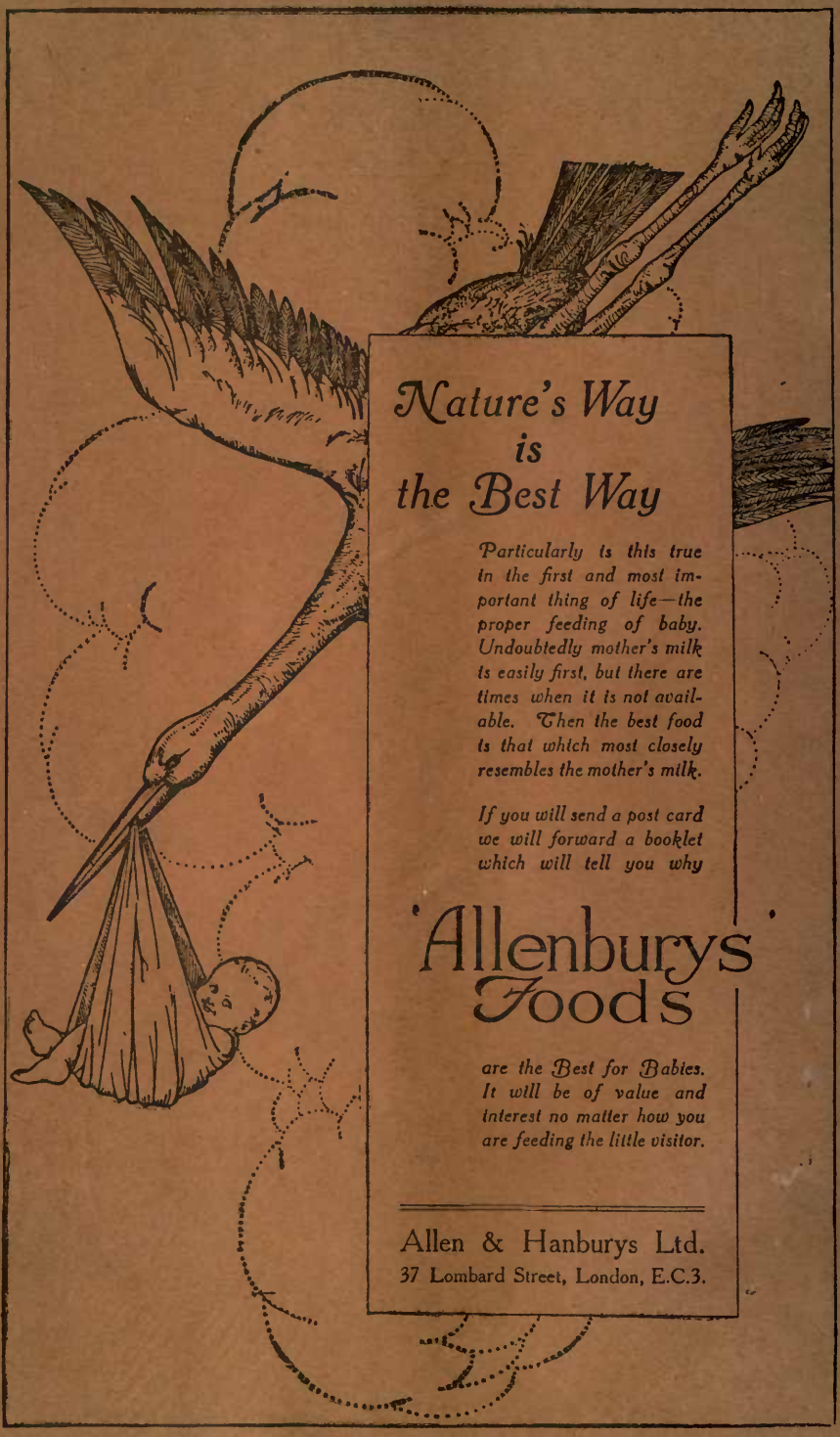

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